

Hafa Adai!

Video alleging bribery reportedly a 'prank' **PAGE 2**

Spay and neuter clinic planned for May and June. **PAGE 3**

\$1

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Report: All DPW vehicles have expired licenses, no insurance

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Transition Committee for the Department of Public Works has found that all DPW vehicles currently have expired licenses and have no insurance coverage.

The Transition Committee's report, a copy of which was obtained by *Saipan Tribune* yesterday, also found, among other things, that the handling of tipping fees at DPW's Transfer Sta-



Yumul

tion in Lower Base has raised flags for the committee, which recommends that the Office of the Public Auditor audit the daily tipping fee collection at the Transfer

» **Handling of tipping fees concerns Transition Committee; recommends OPA audit**

Station and Marpi Landfill.

The tipping fee, which is also called a gate fee, refers to a fee paid by anyone who disposes of waste in a landfill.

In response to *Saipan Tri-*

See **DPW** on **Page 4**

Gas up another 15 cents

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

The CNMI continues to see an upward trend in fuel prices, with Mobil Oil Marianas leading the way with another 15-cent increase, just a little over a week since the last price hike.

The last price increase happened last Tues-

See **GAS** on **Page 4**

A Mobil Oil Marianas price board displays the new 15-cent increase, just a little over a week since the last price hike.

KIMBERLYB. ESMORES



'TOUCHBACK' COUNTDOWN
Days until
'touchback rule'
takes effect on
Sept. 30, 2023:
176

Myers, Itibus nominations are withdrawn; Sirok nominated to PUC, Taijeron to MVA



Sirok

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios has withdrawn his nomination of Robert Harrison Myers Jr. to serve on the board of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. and appointed former CUC counsel James S. Sirok to serve as a member of the Public Utilities Commission.

See **SIROK** on **Page 4**



INSTAGRAM COLLABORATION

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Local Instagram influencers, @ayaka_maru.saipan, left, and @saipan_kaoru ended their Insta-live collaboration at the I Love Saipan store in Garapan on Monday. It was the first four-way collaboration with @lealeaguam_jp teams and @crownplazaresortsaipan that began on Sunday, as a way to showcase the island to the Japan market with Japan's Golden Week and summer vacation approaching.

Medical Referral to start enforcing income eligibility

By **KIMBERLY ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The former Medical Referral program, now known as the Health Network Program,

will now be strictly enforcing eligibility requirements, including income eligibility based on the federal poverty guidelines.

Commonwealth Health-

care Corp. CEO Esther Muña said that CHCC, which took over the former Medical Referral Program last year, said they were still following the

See **MEDICAL** on **Page 4**

INSIDE



BUSINESS

Guam Regional Medical City concludes its Mes CHamoru festivities with a hospital-wide fiesta.

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NATION

For the most devoted Trump conspiracy theorists, there are no coincidences and timing is everything.

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LIFE & STYLE

A plan announced to return Lolita, a killer whale, to her home waters worries her ex-caregivers.

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Local

Video alleging bribery reportedly a 'prank'

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

One of two defendants facing bribery charges in the wake of a viral video that allegedly showed a Division of Fish and Wildlife officer paying a bribe to enter the Grotto after operating hours now claims that the video was a "prank."

Marvin Rodney Pangelinan, an officer of the CNMI Division of Fish and Wildlife, and co-defendant Ji Jing Borja were recently charged with two counts of bribery. According to the information filed with the Superior Court, Pangelinan allegedly

accepted a bribe from Borja. The charges came after a video allegedly showing Borja paying Pangelinan \$100 to gain access to Grotto after hours circulated on social media. Pangelinan has since denied the allegation.

In a recent statement from Borja, he claims that the video was a prank and that it was just meant to "scare" Pangelinan into paying him back for borrowing money from him.

He explained that he was not paying Pangelinan to access the Grotto and that Pangelinan never asked him for payment to enter Grotto.

"On Feb. 12, Pangelinan from Fish and Wildlife was asking to borrow \$200 from me. I wanted to help him but I don't like him because he is the only Fish and Wildlife employee who brings a handgun to show off. So I decided to help him but also [to make sure] he doesn't take advantage of me or others, I decided to make a prank video to teach him a small lesson by making up this story. This story was made up," he stated.

The video, however, later reached DFW officials and the Office of the Attorney General, which filed the bribery charges against the two men.

Borja also insists he is a licensed diving instructor and runs a legitimate diving business, with 10 years' experience, contrary to allegations that he is an "unlicensed tourist guide operator."

According to court information, the OAG charged Pangelinan and Borja in Superior Court, alleging that Borja paid Pangelinan \$100 so that Borja could run his business at the Grotto without proper documentation.

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Spay and neuter clinic planned for May and June



By **LEIGH GASES**
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

To make animal services more accessible on Saipan, the Saipan Dog Control Program is partnering once again with Saipan Humane Society to bring a four-week spay/neuter clinic to the community this May and June.

The clinic will be held at the Saipan Mayor's Animal Shelter in As Perdido from May 18 to June 19, 2023,

and will be staffed by two veterinarians, including returning volunteer veterinarian Dr. Whitney Collins.

Services provided will include spay/neuter surgery, vaccines, heartworm tests, flea/tick medicine, deworming, and more. In addition, Collins will be offering veterinary consultations for specific medical issues.

"It is imperative that we continue to strengthen our partnership with the Saipan Human Society so that we

can offer much-needed services to our community. Sterilizing animals is one part of how we can resolve animal overpopulation on Saipan," said Saipan Mayor RB Camacho.

According to Saipan Humane Society founder Lauren Cabrera, "Our partnership with the Saipan Mayor's Office and Dog Control Program is going very well. This partnership is the key to our success—we could not do it without their support."

Saipan Dog Control staff

have noted that the dog population on Saipan continues to remain high. "Our team is very busy every day, catching dogs and responding to complaints. It is important that the community contains their dogs, and also takes advantage of clinics like this to sterilize their pets and reduce overpopulation," said Dog Control Program manager Martin Pangelinan.

To get on the spay/neuter waitlist, visit <https://bit.ly/SHSClinic>. Saipan Humane Society's team will reach out to schedule appointments soon.

ments soon.

If you want to make a donation, Saipan Humane Society need funds to support the purchase of equipment for sterilization clinics. They are also looking for volunteers to assist with clinics, and sponsors to provide housing and meals for visiting volunteer veterinarians.

For inquiries, email saipanhumane@gmail.com or visit them on Instagram and Facebook. You may also call the Saipan Mayor's Office at (670) 234-

6208 during office hours, which are Monday to Friday, 7:30am to 4:30pm. It is closed on holidays.

Dogs are also up for adoption at the SMO Animal Shelter. For those interested, call (670)-234-3647 (DOGS).

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NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) Board of Directors hereby gives notice that a special meeting is being called on Tuesday, April 11, 2023, at 9:30 a.m. in the CPA Conference Room, second floor of the Captain George M. Fleming Building at the Port of Saipan on Saipan.

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of Minutes (March 28, 2023)

II. PUBLIC COMMENT(S)

III. SPECIAL MEETING ITEMS:

1. Divert Lease Amendment
2. 1983 Lease Amendment

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION (if needed)

V. MISCELLANEOUS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

VI. ADJOURNMENT

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the above agenda items. A time limit may be imposed. Video Conferencing is also available via Zoom. See link below.

Zoom link: Meeting ID: 898 0318 0837 Passcode: 573227

KIMBERLYN KING-HINDS
Chairwoman, Board of Directors

April 06, 2023

Flores names bill after fatal shooting victim

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Rep. Marissa Renee Flores (Ind-Saipan) has introduced a bill that is intended to make sure defendants in criminal cases show up in court, while at the same time improving protection of the public and victims of crime.

Flores cited her House Bill 23-33 as “The Keisha King Bail Reform Act.” King was killed on March 12, 2020 when her boyfriend, Gordon Castro, a convicted felon with a substantial criminal history, shot her.

Flores, who chairs the House of Representatives Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee, stated in the legislation that the Keisha King Bail Reform Act narrows the right to bail, imposes stricter conditions for release and applies stronger enforcement of bail conditions.

The bill seeks to amend subsections of Title 6, Division 6, Chapter 4 of the Commonwealth Code pertaining to Right to bail and add a new subsection.

Under the bill, a person arrested for a felony offense may be released on reasonable bail by any judge, provided that the prosecutor is given reasonable opportunity to be heard before any application for bail is granted.

No person shall be released on bail for an offense committed while released on bail or after arrest for violation of a condition of probation that includes an allegation of a new offense. The bill also provides several other bail conditions.

Flores said that when King was kidnapped, Gordon was out on bail on two pending felony drug cases despite the fact that he was on probation for assault with a dangerous weapon.

Flores said that Gordon’s actions

resulted in his own death and the death of King.

She said there has been an increase in the number of cases in which criminal defendants with prior convictions and a history of violence have been released on bail without proper supervision or who have committed violations of the conditions of release, including the failure to appear or commission of a new offense, without any substantial consequences.

Flores said Castro had violated the conditions of his probation and had committed two separate felony offenses but was still released on bail.

While out on that bail, Castro committed a violent felony crime, evaded arrest, kidnapped a girlfriend, obtained a firearm from a Department of Corrections officer, and repeatedly fired the weapon at officers.

Flores said criminal defendants with a criminal history or who violate the conditions of their release pose an increased danger to the community.

Flores said her amendments provide for more consistent application of conditions of release and consequences for violation of those conditions.

GAS

From Page 1

day, with oil companies increasing their prices by 15 cents. Yesterday afternoon, Mobil Oil Marianas raised its gas prices again by 15 cents. Shell Marianas is expected to follow suit today.

Mobil Oil Marianas now charges \$5.41 per gallon of its Extra Fuel from 5.26 per gallon. Mobil also raised its Supreme fuel from \$5.71 per gallon to \$5.86 while diesel remains at \$5.73 per gallon.

According to a 53-year-old mo-

torist, he is upset with the seesawing fuel prices. “I don’t understand the increase, decrease, then increase again. Might as well keep it at either a high or low price and leave it until they have to hike it up by, like, 50 cents or something. This is ridiculous,” he said.

Another motorist said he should’ve followed his gut and filled his tank the day before.

“I was honestly thinking about gas-sing my truck the other day but I was like ‘I’ll just go tomorrow after work.’ That was a bad decision because when I got off, gas was increased again. Should’ve followed my gut,” he said.

SIROK

From Page 1

Palacios also withdrew his nomination of former Commonwealth Development Authority board chair Pedro I. Itibus to the CUC board and also appointed Jamika R. Tajeron to serve as a member of the Marianas Visitors Authority board.

Myers was supposed to represent Rota on the CUC board, but Palacios withdrew Myers’ appointment last March 14. The governor did not state why in his letter to Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan).

Sirok, on the other hand, was nominated to serve as a member of the PUC representing Saipan and the Northern Islands. If confirmed by both Senate and House, Sirok will serve a four-year term that will expire on April 3, 2026.

The governor said Sirok is highly qualified to fulfill the vital responsibilities of PUC and that he and Lt.

Gov. David M. Apatang are confident that he will devote his time and efforts to represent the interests of the Commonwealth.

As for Itibus’ appointment, Palacios notified DeLeon Guerrero last March 14 that he is withdrawing the nomination at this time, without indicating the reason for the withdrawal.

The Senate Executive Appointments and Government Investigations Committee already conducted a confirmation hearing for Itibus last March 7.

Itibus was appointed to serve the CUC board representing Saipan and the Carolinian community.

Pertaining to the nomination of Tajeron, Palacios said he is appointing Tajeron as a member of the MVA board to represent Saipan. If confirmed by the Senate, Tajeron would serve a four-year term.

Jamika Tajeron, who is currently a manager of DFS Group Ltd., is the wife of House legal counsel Joseph Tajeron.

Bills aim to help individuals with special needs, tax credit for monetary donations

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Rep. Thomas John Dela Cruz Manglona (R-Saipan) has introduced a bill that seeks to provide tax incentives for employers who hire individuals with special needs, and a legislation that aims to establish a tax credit for monetary donations/contributions to public hospitals and/or clinics.

Manglona said yesterday that if House Bill 23-35 and 23-39 are enacted, these pieces of legislation will help provide for more inclusion for community members with disabilities in the workforce and help to give more necessary assistance for public hospitals and clinics, while also providing incentives to businesses who support these causes.

“I wanted the first set of bills that I introduced to be meaningful and have a positive impact on our community,” said the neophyte lawmaker in a statement.

Manglona said it takes everyone in the community to work together to create positive impacts, and that he is

extremely blessed to be in a position to help spark these changes.

Under House Bill 23-35, a new section is added to the Commonwealth Code to provide a long-term disability employment tax credit.

House Bill 23-39 would add a new section to the Commonwealth Code that would establish the Healthcare Contribution Tax Credit.

With respect to House Bill 23-35, Manglona stated that this legislation addresses issues regarding discrimination in employment, public services, public accommodations, and telecommunications for people with disabilities.

He said it gives similar protections against discrimination to Americans with disabilities as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination based on race, religion, sex, national origin, and other characteristics.

The lawmaker said many individuals with disabilities in the CNMI are eager and determined to be part of the workforce. He said it would be appropriate to provide incentives for employers to hire these individuals.

He said a nonrefundable tax credit will give these businesses an incentive to provide a suitable platform for this special group of individuals to showcase their skills and feel empowered to be positive contributions to society.

With respect to H.B. 23-39, Manglona stated that throughout the years, businesses in the Commonwealth have been able and are willing to make generous donations to causes that would benefit the communities. He said it would be exceptionally imperative to provide incentives for businesses to make cash donations/contributions to facilities that are dedicated to serving the community. Such incentive would include a tax credit for the cash donations/contributions, Manglona said.

He said with these generous endowments, the recipient hospitals and/or clinics can use the funds to improve their facilities and services for the betterment of future patients to come.

As a result of these tax credits, Manglona said, both the business donors and the hospital/clinic facilities will mutually benefit from each other, further yielding medical benefit for future generations to come.

DPW

From Page 1

bune’s questions about the report, acting DPW secretary Ray N. Yumul, who served as leader of the Transition Committee for DPW, said yesterday that all DPW vehicles still have expired license and without insurance coverage. Yumul said he will have to purchase insurance and update the vehicle registrations.

Regardless of the fact that the CNMI government is generally “self-insured,” if the accident is caused by a DPW driver’s negligence, that person may potentially be personally liable, he said. This is especially so, Yumul said, if the staff takes department vehicles home.

At this time, roads and grounds staff with 24-hour response vehicles are allowed to take DPW-issued vehicles home to enable them to quick-

ly respond to downed trees blocking roads, flash floods, and other matters.

As for the concern about the tipping fees, Yumul said it was observed that the only payment method accepted is cash, company checks, or charge on account for approved haulers.

Yumul said credit cards are currently not being accepted as a form of payment and cash is predominantly the main form of payment.

With respect to vehicles, the committee said DPW has a total of 39 vehicles, with four down for maintenance and two on loan to other agencies.

The committee said there are a total of 15 vehicles assigned as 24/7 response vehicles, although DPW’s normal business hours are from 7:30am to 4:30pm Monday through Friday except for the Solid Waste Management Division, which operates on Saturdays. The committee recommends that the 24/7 vehicle use must be revisited and limited.

With respect to the Solid Waste Management Division, the committee found that for fiscal year 2021, the tipping fees collected at the Marpi Landfill amounted to \$1,007,064, and for fiscal year 2022, the amount collected reached \$982,353.

The committee also found that the former DPW secretary has issued “waivers” of tipping fees to government agencies.

On the waiver issue, Yumul said yesterday that in order to stay in compliance with DPW’s permit to operate the landfill, tipping fees must be collected to assure that they can close cells once they become full.

“Funding for the cell closure must be in place. Collection of tipping fees and beautification tax is the funding source,” Yumul said.

He said private and commercial trash haulers are dutifully paying their tipping fees and that the CNMI government must do the same.

MEDICAL

From Page 1

outdated income requirement and they determined it was necessary to update poverty level guideline.

“The income eligibility requirement—we changed it to match the current year. When we were looking at the regulations, I believe we were still following the 2011 or 2012 income requirement. So we updated the federal poverty level to the current year,” she said.

Since taking over the Medical Referral Program last year, CHCC has since made some drastic changes in order to both bring the program into compliance with federal regulations, as well as make it sustainable for years to come.

“The public auditor reports previously stated that we were not following federal regulations, so since [the program is] in our hands now, we will be doing that. The commitment we made when we took on this program is that we have to base it off of regulations to make it fair and justifiable so we have something to refer to when deciding if an individual should get benefits,” Muña added.

The federal poverty guidelines are

adjusted every year according to the rate of inflation.

As of January 2023, the federal poverty level for a household of one is about \$18,210 while a family of five is about \$43,930.

In 2011, the federal poverty guidelines for a household of one was about \$13,600 while a family of five was about \$32,720.

“Updating the eligibility requirement would increase the number of individuals eligible for HNP,” said Muña.

According to CHCC chief financial officer Perlita Santos, the difference now is that CHCC and HNP will be strictly enforcing these guidelines as it hadn’t been done in the past.

“The difference now is that we are heavily enforcing income requirement, which wasn’t entirely being done in the past. We’re enforcing the updated poverty level,” she said.

The good news is that, with the updated poverty level eligibility requirement, more individuals will qualify for the HNP program.

“Following the 2011 poverty level guidelines would have disqualified most of everyone in the CNMI. We are enforcing the 2023 income requirement, which now makes more people eligible,” Santos said.

District Court hosts 1st Women's Month Meet and Mingle



By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

Capping the celebration of March as International Women's Month, the U.S. District Court for the NMI hosted last Friday its first Women's Month Meet and Mingle to inspire more women to pursue careers in law.

With the theme of the event being "learning from the ladies in the law," the U.S. District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands and the CNMI Bar Association hosted the inaugural community engagement event at the Gualo Rai courthouse, with female judges and lawyers taking the spotlight.

According to the organizers, the event's goal was to enhance and promote diversity in the legal profession by highlighting the stories of women with diverse backgrounds, including practicing attorneys, working professionals, and judges who work or interact with the federal judiciary.

"Of female jurists and legal professionals, we aim to inspire and encourage more women to pursue careers in law and help enhance diversity in the legal field," said Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona.

The event's attendees included students from the Northern Marianas College and the Public School System. Also in attendance was CNMI Bar Association president Charity R. Hodson and other members of the bar association, court staff from both the U.S. District Court and the CNMI Judiciary, as well as community members.

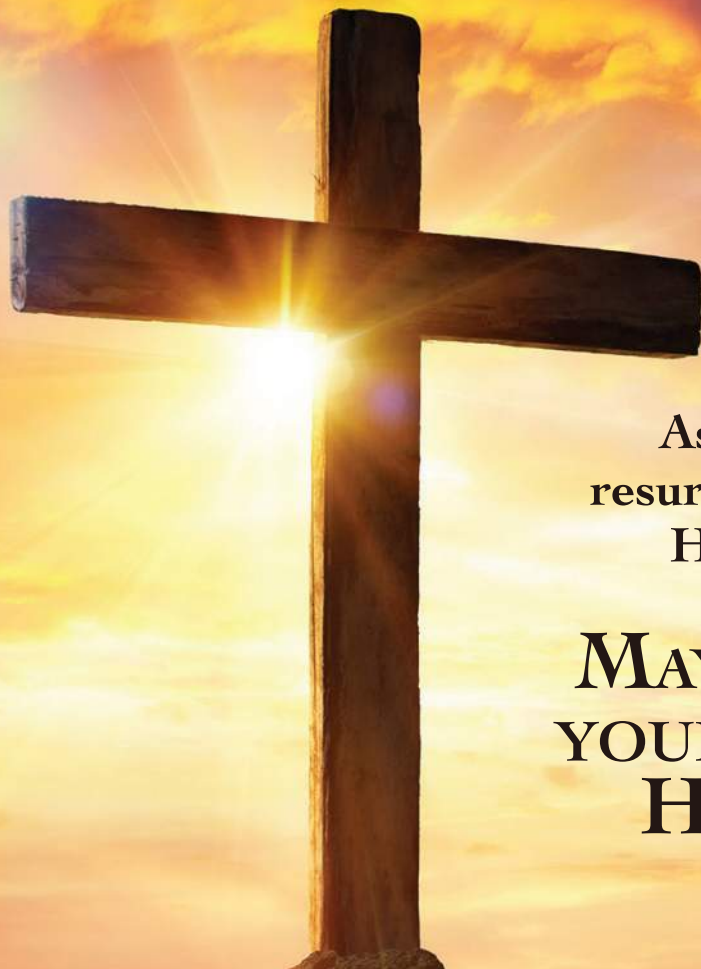
"The U.S. District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands looks forward to hosting similar community outreach events, which contributes to the court's mission of providing equal access to justice for all," said Manglona.

The panelists who spoke at the first Women's Month Meet and Mingle event, from left to right, were Criminal Justice Act defense attorney Janet H. King, U.S. Probation officer Juanette F. David-Atalig, Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona, magistrate judge/clerk of court Heather L. Kennedy, designated judge and CNMI Superior Court Associate Judge Teresa K. Kim-Tenorio, and assistant U.S. Attorney Ashley Kost. The panelists shared their experiences and insights as women working in the legal profession. The event was coordinated by Daniel Brown, the District Court's administrative specialist and outreach coordinator, and was moderated by law clerk Gretchen A. Smith. Audience members had an opportunity to connect with the panelists during the question and answer portion of the program.

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Students to job shadow at Crowne Plaza Resort



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

High school students of the Trading Up START Hospitality program through the Northern Marianas Technical Institute and the Island Training Solutions take part in the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan's IHG Academy Program job shadowing orientation and hotel tour on Wednesday afternoon.

By **LEIGH GASES**

leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

High school students who will be participating in the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan's IHG Academy program had an orientation and tour of the prop-

erty last Wednesday afternoon as a prelude to their job shadowing tasks at the hotel.

A total of 18 high school students from Saipan Southern High School (3), Marianas High School (15), and Kagman High School (3), along

with Northern Marianas Technical Institute's Ben Babauta, Hannah Blanco of Island Training Solutions, and SSHS ITS instructor Alyona Gersonde, attended the hotel's orientation at the Azucena Room.

Later, the students were

divided into groups for an extensive tour of the hotel's rooms, food and beverage outlets, kid's club and tennis court, and fitness center and swimming pools.

The students are participants in the Trading Up START Hospitality program, which is part of a memorandum of understanding among Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, NMTech, and ITS.

In the orientation led by Robert Coates, general manager of the hotel, alongside the area human resources director, it gave the students a glimpse on the workplace areas and their future assignments. The main objective is to entice the young students to join and build their careers in the hospitality and tourism industry, which Saipan's economy is dependent on.

The orientation included the history of IHG, what the IHG Academy Shadowing/Resort Exposure Program is, what products, services, and facilities the resort offers, followed by a tour of the hotel.

When asked how the ori-

entation and tour went for the students, Blanco said, "I believe [the students] are ready. I was impressed with their timeliness and how they dressed in their business casual [attire]."

"I know they have been preparing for this in their Trading Up elective classes at school and now they get to experience it firsthand. What's great about Crowne Plaza Resort is that they are allowing the students to rotate to different departments each day so that they can see where their interests are within the resort," she said.

Samantha Calub, a senior at MHS, said that what she learned during the orientation "was really interesting because they have a lot of [hotel] brands that they branched out to. The excitement of working here is pretty high since I've seen some of the rooms and it's really nice. Some of the workers I've met are really nice people—especially the GM. I think it's going to be interesting working in F&B and housekeeping."



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation



JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 23-057

Opening Date: Monday, March 27, 2023

Closing Date: Monday, April 10, 2023

POSITION TITLE:	FEMA Disaster and Project Specialist (Management & Planning)
DEPARTMENT:	Renewable Energy & Systems Planning
LOCATION:	Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA
ANNUAL SALARY:	\$65,000.00 - \$70,000.00 per annum, Exempt
CONTRACT:	Contracted
POSITION(S):	One (1)

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Deputy Director for Electric Power Systems or his/her designee. This class specification represents only the core areas of responsibilities; specific position assignments will vary depending on the needs of Renewable Energy and Systems Planning.

Roles & Responsibilities:

- Serve as a strong disaster recovery expert, with demonstrated experience supporting local governments through long term recoveries from natural disasters, with the ability to as a hands-on project manager overseeing a dynamic and complex disaster recovery. Expected to leverage understanding of the myriad of federal and state funding streams (e.g., FEMA Public Assistance, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, Community Disaster Block Grants – Disaster Recovery, etc.), and how they can be strategically pursued and layered to address complex issues and needs in a post-catastrophic disaster environment.
- Serve as a FEMA Public Assistance Program subject matter expert and be able to answer policy related questions within a reasonable, but necessary timeframe.
- Oversee a multi-disciplinary team supporting all aspects of a recovery (e.g., cost recovery, infrastructure redevelopment, economic development, housing, social services, etc.), delegating tasks, assessing staffing needs, and developing methodologies to meet unmet needs and maximizing funding.
- Maintain strong project management best practices, ensuring the client has visibility on all efforts; deliverables are of the utmost quality; and upholding Hagerty's core values of integrity, innovation, teamwork, and excellence within all efforts.

Duties:

- Provide programmatic assistance to clients and maintain currency of and compliance with applicable state and federal grant management policies and procedures relating to recovery (i.e., the PA Grant Program, Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA), Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC), programs funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), etc.
- Responsible for tracking contracts, maintaining project cost projections, internal project documentation, and project status.
- Identify potential impacts/implications of policy changes to Federal/State/Local programs and provide briefings as required.
- Develop Disaster Recovery Frameworks for clients to include pre- and post-disaster recovery plans, job aids, and implementation plans.
- Conduct needs assessment and gap analysis as it relates to recovery planning, the client's emergency operations plan, and mitigation planning.
- Conduct meetings and briefings with applicants.
- Facilitate recovery stakeholder meetings to include development of meeting agendas and PowerPoint presentations.
- Write proposals, RFI documentation and data to support state and local government grant reimbursement projects.
- Perform project validation reviews and address inconsistencies, special considerations, and compliance issues with management.
- Make hazard mitigation determinations and recommendations to reduce or eliminate the chance of damages occurring in the future.
- Provide technical guidance and recommendations to management.
- Identify and elevate administrative issues for resolution.
- Review supporting documentation for the assigned sub-awards to ensure that each sub-recipient receives appropriate reimbursements.
- Develop, maintain, and implement plans and procedures associated with the effective and efficient delivery and monitoring of grant performance.
- Perform quality control review procedures over work performed by other Disaster Recovery Specialists and Grants Management Specialists.
- Collaborate with WOB's Disaster Recovery Specialists to identify and elevate financial and administrative issues for resolution, including responding to Federal Awarding Agency or Recipient Request for Information.
- Interacting with senior staff from local, state, and federal government.
- Supervising Disaster Recovery Specialists and other staff.
- Perform other duties of similar nature and level as assigned by management.

Situational Awareness: During site assessments, conditions may be austere including prolonged exposure to excessive heat and cold, prolonged sun exposure and no electricity, heat, or air conditioning. Other potential risks include air quality issues, standing water, mosquitos, snakes, debris, and other potential exposures.

Physical Demands: Site assessments may require extensive walking and standing for extended periods of time; working in small spaces, tunnels, and ditches; climbing ladders.

Minimum Requirements:

Education: Bachelor's degree in Public or Business Administration, Accounting or related field and 4 years of direct workrelated experience; or, an equivalent combination of education and experience sufficient to successfully perform the essential duties of the job such as those listed above.

Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations, and/or ordinances. Research methods; Basic budgeting principles, Principles and practices related to assignment area; Customer service principles; Modern office technology.

Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Reviewing and preparing a variety of technical reports and documents; Gathering information and conducting research; Analyzing data; Conducting studies, analyzing results and preparing recommendations; Monitoring and maintaining database information; serving as a liaison with the internal and external customers; Preparing and delivering communication materials and presentations; Drafting policies and procedures; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Ability to write and comprehend written documents related to utility projects and problems; Spoken and written communication ability is essential.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

P. O. Box 501220, Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, MP 96950

Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Fax: (670) 235-5131

CUC is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS CNMI GOVERNMENT



INVITATION TO BID RFP NO.: DPW23-RFP NO.: 42300059

SUBMISSION DATE: May 02, 2023 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"Department of Public Works Planning Road Condition and Flood Hazard Mapping Project"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The RFP Package and Scope of Work is available on or after **March 30, 2023** at the Department of Public Works, Technical Services Division 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center.

There will be a **Pre-Proposal Conference** for this project on **April 20, 2023**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office No. 207 Building Code Office, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **April 27, 2023** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ RAY N. YUMUL
ACTING SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ BRIEN SERS NICHOLAS JR.
ACTING DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF
PROCUREMENT SERVICES

/S/ PATRICK C. GUERRERO
GOVERNOR'S AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE (GAR)

'In past few fiscal years, OPA has cut operational costs at all levels'

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

In the few past fiscal years, the Office of the Public Auditor has operated under the central government's austerity measures and has reduced operational costs at all levels to help ease the financial burdens of the local government, according to temporary public auditor Dora I. Deleon Guerrero.

She said OPA thus will continue to evaluate its resource needs to ensure that the office is able to execute its mandates efficiently and effectively.

Deleon Guerrero discussed OPA's reduction of its operational costs in OPA's budget request for fiscal year 2024 addressed to Virginia C. Villagomez, special assistant for the Office of Management

and Budget.

Deleon Guerrero said OPA's fiscal year budget submission is a decrease of \$279,302 from the fiscal year 2023 approved budget of \$2.1 million.

She attributed the decrease largely to the completion of OPA's building renovations, equipment purchases, and other contractual obligations that were funded by the American Rescue Plan Act.

Deleon Guerrero also disclosed that OPA has submitted grant proposals for the Technical Assistance Program and the Justice Assistance Grant of the Office of Insular Affairs and the U.S. Department of Justice, respectively.

If awarded, she said, most of OPA's personnel training costs could potentially be funded by these grants.

Warning out vs sailing in small craft

A small craft advisory remains in effect until 6pm today, Friday.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, east winds of 15 to 25 knots, with

gusts of up to 30 knots and seas of 9 to 12 feet are expected in Marianas coastal waters. Conditions will be hazardous to small craft. All experienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid boating in these hazardous conditions. **(PR)**



Happy Easter!

May you be blessed with love, peace, and prosperity as you celebrate this joyful occasion with loved ones. Have a blessed and wonderful Easter!

Ramon "RB" Jose Blas Camacho
Mayor of Saipan and Staff

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
MUNICIPALITY OF SAIPAN
GUAM



HAPPY Easter

We wish you a beautiful Easter Sunday! May this peaceful holiday bring you love, happiness, and hope.

Shirley's COFFEE SHOP
Home of the Best Fried Rice

Garapan: Tel: (670) 233-4519/20 Sun - Wed 6am - 10pm, Thurs - 6am - 2am, Fri - Sat - 24 hrs
Susupe: Tel: (670) 235-5379/80 6am - 10pm daily

[shirleyscoffeeshopfanpage](#) [shirleyscoffeeshop](#)

NMC to host 2nd meet-and-greet with film producer Krevoy

Hollywood filmmaker Brad Krevoy engages with aspiring filmmakers during a previous meet-and-greet hosted by Northern Marianas College in November 2022 at the Hafa Adai Roasting Company. Krevoy will return to the CNMI community on April 10, 2023, at 6pm at Tapped Out on Micro Beach Road, to support NMC's ongoing work in developing a film program and to inspire the next generation of storytellers.

NMC



Longtime Hollywood filmmaker and producer Brad Krevoy, along with the Northern Marianas College, will be hosting a second meet-and-greet for aspiring filmmakers on Monday, April 10, 2023, at 6pm at Tapped Out on Micro Beach Road across the American Memorial Park.

Krevoy's visit coincides with NMC's ongoing work in developing a film program to educate the next generation of filmmakers and storytellers in the Marianas.

One of the most prolific and adaptable independent film/TV producers working today, Krevoy has played a key role in the finance, development, production and distribution of more than 150 motion picture and television projects, most famously the 1994 blockbuster comedy, Dumb and Dumber starring Jim Carrey.

He has been recently well-known within the holiday and family film space, having produced more than 50 highly rated and well-received projects for Netflix and Hallmark since 2013. He recently produced Netflix's 2020 film Operation Christmas Drop, which was filmed in Guam. His latest film, Falling for Christmas starring Lindsay Lohan, was on Netflix's Top 10 list.

His portfolio includes Netflix's Christmas Prince trilogy starring Rose McIver and Ben Lamb, The Princess Switch starring Vanessa Hudgens, Holiday in the Wild starring Rob Lowe and Kristin Davis,

The Crossword Mysteries starring Lacey Chabert, A Christmas Melody starring Mariah Carey, I'll Be Home for Christmas starring Josh Brolin, and The Wedding March starring Jack Wagner, as well as the hit longest-running Hallmark series When Calls the Heart, currently airing its seventh season, and the spin-off series When Hope Calls, which premiered as a launch title for Hallmark's new streaming service in 2019.

Krevoy is the chief executive officer and co-founder of the Motion Picture Corporation of America, a leading provider of commercial motion picture products at all budget levels and an aggressive sales and marketing force with U.S. studios and international buyers. MPCA's motion picture and television projects have grossed more than \$1 billion worldwide in all media.

He is also known for jumpstarting the careers of many young actors and filmmakers who have gone on to become some of the biggest names working in Hollywood today, including the Farrelly brothers, Vince Vaughn, Ben Stiller, Sarah Jessica Parker, Will Ferrell, Viggo Mortensen, Ashley Judd, Jude Law, Reese Witherspoon, Paul Rudd, Kirsten Dunst, Courtney Cox, Bill Paxton, Ben Foster, Gretchen Mol, and Jon Turteltaub.

The college encourages the film and arts community of the Marianas to attend. (NMC)

DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

P. O. Box 501304, Saipan MP 96950 | Gualo Rai Center, Saipan
Tel. No. 664-8300 FAX NO. 664-8315
www.dcrm.gov.mp

NOTICE OF APPLICATION

As of April 7, 2023

THE FOLLOWING IS A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF COASTAL PERMIT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE DCRM OFFICE:

APPLICANT	DATE APPLICATION RECEIVED	APPLICATION PROJECT DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TYPE	STATUS
1. Sakura CNMI Corporation dba Sakura Marine Sports	12/29/2022 CRM-MD2022-0005	Temporary Beach Concession	Garapan, Saipan	Minor Development	ON HOLD*
2. Asia Pacific, Inc. dba Asia Marine Sports	02/09/2023 CRM-MD2023-0011	Temporary Beach Concession	Garapan Saipan	Minor Development	Approved*
3. C Pacific Corporation dba Two Seasons Resort Suites	2/28/2023 APC2023-0025	Main Pool, Kids Pool, 2 Wooden Decks, Koi Pond, Landscaping, Driveway & Cistern Tank	Kannat Tabla, Saipan	Wetlands and Mangroves	Approved* 3/27/2023
4. Terracotta Hotel Six Holdings, LLC.	3/7/2023 CRM-MS2023-0004	Transfer of Interest/Renovation of Hotel One	Garapan, Saipan	Major Siting	Application Review*
5. Northern Marianas College (NMC)	3/10/2023 CRM-MS2023-0005	New Construction of Student Center Building	As Terlaje, Saipan	Major Siting	Application Review*
6. Department of Public Works (DPW)	3/10/2023 CRM-MS2023-0006	Sugar Dock Reconstruction & Dredging Project	Chalan Kanoa, Saipan	Major Siting	Application Review*
7. Office of the Mayor, Municipality of Saipan	3/10/2023 CRM-MD2023-0020	Tree Trimming & Maintenance	Garapan, Saipan	Minor Development	Approved* 3/29/2023
8. Heshun Corporation New Seaside Restaurant	3/17/2023 CRM-MD2023-0018	Re-Pavement of Parking Lot & Driveway (After-the-Fact)	Garapan, Saipan	Minor Development	Approved* 3/30/2023
9. Primtek Construction	3/20/2023 CRM-MD2023-0019	Lower Base Staging Area	Lower Base, Saipan	Minor Development	Approved* 3/27/2023
10. CNMI United Investment Corporation, Inc.	3/20/2023 APC2023-0029	Construction of Dewatering Facility	Garapan, Saipan	Shoreline	On Hold*
11. Smart Star, Inc. dba Blue Bay Diving Club	3/22/2023 APC2023-0027	SCUBA Diving/Tour Operation	All Designated Dive Sites	Lagoon & Reef	Approved* 3/31/2023
12. Phoenix Enterprises, Inc. dba Phoenix Marine Sports	3/22/2023 APC2023-0028	Snorkeling, Sailing & Hobie Cats	Saipan & Managaha Lagoon	Lagoon & Reef	Approved* 3/31/2023
13. Saipan Sunset Cruise, Inc.	3/27/2023 CRM-MD2023-0021	Dry-Dock	Puerto Rico, Saipan	Ports & Industrial	Under Review*
14. Nury Corporation dba Dive Wish	3/28/2023 SLR-2022-057-R2	Commercial SCUBA Diving Operation - UBA Activities	All Designated Dive Sites	Lagoon & Reef	Approved 4/4/2023

NMIAC §15-10-210 of the CRM Rules and Regulations requires all permit applications to be published in a newspaper for general circulation within the CNMI within 15 days of receipt of application. The list reflects recently received permit applications and those with a recent change in status. New applications are marked with an asterisk (*).

The Public is invited to submit written comments regarding any of the above projects for which a permit decision has not been issued. All permit comments should identify the project by application number. Your comments should be mailed or hand-delivered to the DCRM Office. All persons who desire a public hearing regarding any project may do so by submitting a written request for a public hearing to the DCRM Office within fourteen (14) days for minor permits (APCs) and proposed amended major sitings. Public Hearings are required for all new major siting projects. All public hearing notices are published in a local newspaper of general circulation. Residents of Rota and Tinian may submit comments and hearing requests to their local DCRM Coordinator. Persons wishing to retain the right to appeal a DCRM Permit decision must file a notice of appeal with the DCRM office within thirty (30) days of the issuance of the DCRM permit decision as provided in Part 200 § 15-10-235 of the DCRM Regulations.

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
PO BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP • 96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 | FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
WEBSITE: WWW.CNMI-PORTS.COM

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS FOR ARCHITECTURAL/ENGINEERING DESIGN SERVICES

TINIAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT BACKUP POWER SYSTEM UPGRADE PROJECT NO. CPA-TA-002-23

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CPA is soliciting statements of professional qualifications from interested Consultants for Architectural and Engineering (A/E) Design Services for the upgrade of the airport's backup power system at the Tinian International Airport, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, Project No. CPA-TA-002-23.

The project is being funded by CPA and is in accordance and compliance with CPA's Procurement Rules and Regulations, Section 40-50-202, Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA's Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the proposal package. Electronic copies may be made available upon written request to Ms. Wendi Prater, CPA's Executive Assistant/Project Manager, at wprater@cnmiports.com or Ms. Sheri Llagas at receptionist@cnmiports.com.

Questions regarding this request for qualification statements must be submitted to Ms. Prater or hand delivered to the CPA Administration Office by no later than 5:00 p.m. CHST, Friday, April 21, 2023.

Interested Consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their statements of professional qualifications no later than **5:00 p.m. CHST, FRIDAY, APRIL 28, 2023**. Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330. The statements of professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria provided in the RFQ package.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.

/s/ **CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO**
Executive Director

Date: March 20, 2023

Japan lawyer's group record voices opposing Japan nuclear dump plan

Jun Sasamoto from the Japan Lawyers International Solidarity Association and his wife, Yoku, a filmmaker, arrived in the Commonwealth last March 29, and met with several fishermen and women, some members of the CNMI leadership, and community leaders. They took videos of the people they met expressing their strong opposition to Japan and the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant's plan to release millions of gallons of treated nuclear wastewater into the Pacific Ocean for a period of 10 years.

Among those featured in the couple's videos are Rep. JP Sablan (Ind-Saipan), chairman of the 23rd Saipan & Northern Islands Legislative Delegation, and Rep. Angelo Camacho (Ind-Saipan), chairman of the 23rd House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources, who have jointly expressed their opposition to the plan.

"Tritium has a lifespan of 12 and half years. ... Tritium at its minimum and by itself may not pose a danger, but releasing them in large amount into the water poses a threat to the food we eat and our health," Camacho stated.

Ana Marie SanNicolas, vice chairwoman of the 19th Tinian Municipal Council, urged the Japanese government to

reconsider, saying she grew up in a large family and fishing was and is a part of their lives. "As a mother, I want my children and their children to avail themselves with whatever they can harvest from the ocean," she said.

Tinian Municipal Council chair Joseph E. Santos expressed similar concern over tritium and its effects on sea life and people's health.

Fishermen and women from Rota expressed their concern over the dwindling population of fish and are worried that additional stress to an already taxed ocean environment from climate change will completely destroy the sea life ecosystem.

Pacific Alliance of Municipal Councils president Jim Atalig said that Japan needs to listen to the people whose lives will be greatly disturbed by its actions. "They have no right to unilaterally make decisions affecting other people's lives outside of Japan. The Japanese government doesn't own the ocean. What about our rights as people whose lives literally and often depend on what the ocean can provide, like during the COVID-19 pandemic?" (PR)

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

Happy Easter!

Wishing everyone a very Happy Easter. Let us infuse this day with smiles and festivities to create memories with our loved ones.

Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

HAPPY Easter!

*Warm wishes on Easter
to all our customers and
their families.*



From the management and staff of
WUSHIN
Committed to Safety Excellence

Lower Base, P.O. Box 500440
Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: 322-7415, 322-8733
Fax: 322-7414
Email: wushin2@pticom.com

Happy Easter!

Luke 24:6-7

He is not here; He has risen! Remember how He told you while He was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and, on the third day, be raised again.'



Century Insurance Co., Ltd.
A Tan Holdings Company

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950**Jayvee L. Vallejera** EDITOR
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MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Put Trump's trial on TV: Every American should be able see the full proceedings of the criminal case in Manhattan court

As the Trump grand jury was in secret, the trial must be in public, but in New York State, basically unique in the country, the public is unable to watch trials unless they are lucky enough to snag a courtroom seat. That should change—for all trials—before the prosecution of Donald J. Trump.

But even if the law isn't amended, Trump and DA Alvin Bragg should jointly ask the judge to permit cameras for everything.

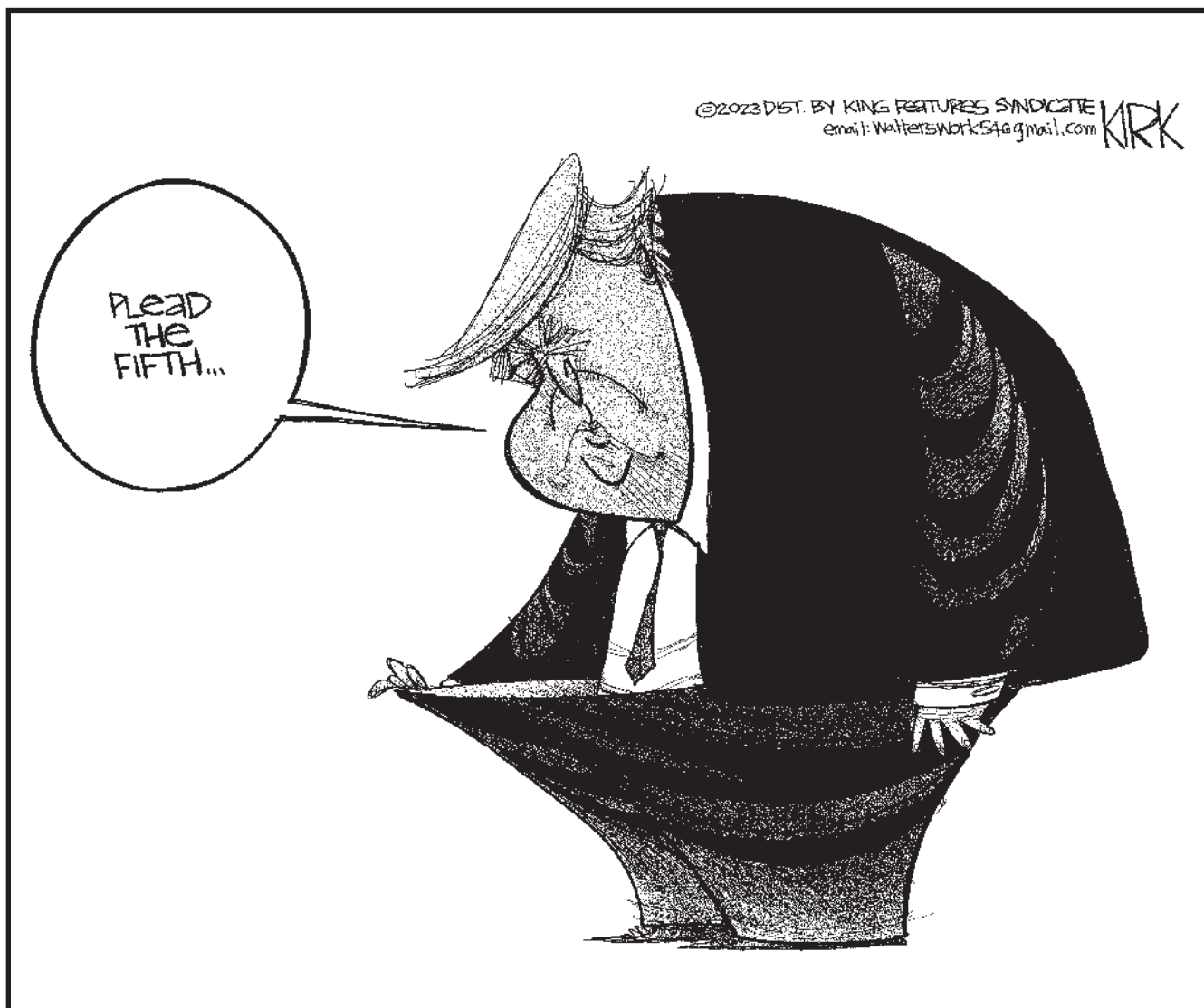
Long ago, New York feared that cameras would encourage grandstanding and banned them. Over time, as state after state has embraced transparency, it's clear that the benefits, letting people see how cases are presented and proved or not, far outweigh the risks.

A coming trial, with unprecedented public interest, will be an O.J.-sized spectacle in which every interaction is run through the cable TV and Twitter hysteria mills. Cameras in court can be an antidote to such breathlessness. Both Trump boosters and Trump haters would see what actually unfolds: the banalities on which the case is built, how witnesses are examined and cross-examined, how holes are poked in the prosecution. As they do, they are less likely to embrace outlandish conspiracies and likelier to root their reactions in reality. This would be a public education as important as putting Senate hearings on C-SPAN.

From 1987 to 1997, New York State piloted cameras in the courtroom. That experiment was a great success, but it lapsed. Since then, the criminal defense bar, which fears that TV will bias proceedings against the accused, has used its clout in Albany to keep video out of court despite every chief judge for decades wanting cameras. Every year there's a bill to allow cameras and every year it is defeated. There's a bill this year and it should pass, in time for Trump's trial.

Currently, cameras are only allowed for non-witness testimony portions, like opening and closing arguments, but 330 million Americans need to see all of it. Trump and Bragg should ask the judge to bring in cameras.

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Trump isn't Republicans' only headache

Republicans have a big problem. No, not the guy who got indicted. At least not directly.

The most significant election of 2023 went to the Democrats on Tuesday, as liberal Wisconsin judge Janet Protasiewicz defeated her conservative rival Dan Kelly to flip the 4-3 majority on the state Supreme Court.

The outcome was a big achievement for Democrats, who rallied supporters and raised money across the country for what would normally be a little-noticed (and officially nonpartisan) contest. Protasiewicz made abortion rights a centerpiece of her campaign, and with her victory the court is now expected to overturn Wisconsin's abortion ban rooted in a 19th century statute.

Protasiewicz's win continues a pattern of Democratic successes in the midterms and in other contests that we have seen ever since Donald Trump captured the White House in 2016. The results are especially remarkable given President Joe Biden's unpopularity nationally.

In particular, the Wisconsin contest marked another election fought about abortion in which Republicans came up short. Ever since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* last year, Democrats have been on the offensive on reproductive rights, deploying resources and driving voter turnout. Republicans don't appear to have an answer, and Democrats will read the Wisconsin results as yet another reason to campaign hard on the issue.

The other big policy outcome from the Wisconsin Supreme Court vote will involve districting. Wisconsin Republicans have established unusually strong partisan gerrymanders for both chambers of the state legislature and for the state's U.S. House districts. As a result, Republicans hold large majorities in both legislative chambers and control 6 of 8 U.S. House seats, even though the state is evenly divided between Republicans and Democrats. The new Democrat-aligned majority on the state Supreme Court could undo the legislative maps drawn by Republicans, a change that might allow Democrats to pick up two U.S. House seats and challenge the GOP's hold on the state legislature.

Tuesday's vote could be consequential in other ways. Since Wisconsin is a key swing state in presidential elections, Judge Protasiewicz's win will close off one of the avenues Trump tried to use to overturn the 2020 election—and would presumably pursue again if he were to be nominated and lose in 2024. To be fair, none of the Republican-majority courts, state legislative bodies or Republican governors that Trump hoped would reject the true vote tally and hand him the election actually came through for him. But enough individual judges and elected officials cooperated with

By **JONATHAN BERNSTEIN**
Bloomberg Opinion

Jonathan Bernstein is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering politics and policy. A former professor of political science at the University of Texas at San Antonio and DePaul University, he wrote *A Plain Blog About Politics*.



him to make the prospect a real threat to democracy in the future.

We should be cautious about extrapolating from either this election or the midterms to 2024. Still, Democrats have to be pleased that Wisconsin appears to be joining Minnesota, Michigan and Pennsylvania as states trending toward their party. Trump's 2016 victory depended on winning three of those states (and coming very close in the fourth, Minnesota), allowing him to win the Electoral College even while losing the popular vote. The recent results suggest Republicans' ability to outperform the popular vote in the Electoral College might be fading.

Electoral tides can be self-fulfilling prophecies. We are at the moment when political parties are starting to field candidates to run in statewide races in 2024, with recruitment for U.S. House and down-ballot races to follow. High-profile elections such as the one in Wisconsin set expectations for party leaders and activists. Seeing these results, strong Democratic candidates are going to be a little more likely to conclude that 2024 is a good year to run for the first time, to keep going instead of retiring, or to attempt to move up to higher office. Strong Republican candidates—already wary from repeated examples of crackpot candidates defeating more reasonable contenders in GOP primaries—are going to be a little less likely to commit.

Candidates aren't the only ones; volunteers and donors are more likely to give hours and dollars when the party thinks it's a good year, while a pessimistic party finds other, non-political uses for those resources.

But what matters most is that Republicans have pursued policy positions and backed candidates that are alienating some of their own voters while driving Democrats to the polls. November 2024 is still a long way off, and patterns can change. But the evidence is growing that Trump-era Republicans are facing a big challenge with no idea how to solve it.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Sustaining UOG's accreditation is key to delivering a high-quality Guam workforce

The University of Guam serves as that steward of place to deliver equitable and inclusive public value through its academic programs, research findings, and extension and outreach services. Every part of our community has benefited in some way through our interns, graduates, research, capstone projects, forums, publications, training, conferences, and array of services. Our graduates can be found in just about every workplace in Guam and throughout our region, including in leadership positions and the armed forces.

When UOG students graduate, they can be confident in knowing that the education they received and the diploma they earned are of high quality. Our university and our programs have undergone a rigorous accreditation review process that ensures that what we offer is aligned with some of the best academic and research programs in the country.

The University of Guam is accredited by the WASC Senior College and University Commission, a U.S. regional accrediting body. The university has been continuously accredited since 1959 and will be completing a continuous 16-year accreditation term in 2024. In its last report, the commission commended UOG's "strong fiscal stewardship." Our accreditation status ensures students continue to have direct access to federal financial aid programs to afford college.

Upcoming accreditation review

When the commission visited in 2016, our general operations appropriation was \$30.6 million. When the accreditation team reviews us again this year, it will note a fiscal year 2023 appropriation of \$23.6 million, a decrease of 23%—or 35% factoring in inflation—over the last five years.

A funding deficiency ultimately impacts our operational needs and subsequently impacts the academic support that is required through its personnel, the classrooms, the labs, and the rest of the resources that are necessary to support academic quality.

With this severe decline in appropriations, it would be difficult to argue that the base appropriation for general operations has sufficiently met academic quality and student support needs.

Accreditation is not the sole responsibility of UOG. Because of the university's land-grant status, this responsibility is shared with our community and our elected leaders to benefit the public at large.

Requesting \$42 million

For fiscal year 2024, UOG is requesting \$42 million for general operations to recover from prior years' funding deficiencies and fully support the quality education for our students and the professional

By **ANITA BORJA ENRIQUEZ**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Anita Borja Enriquez is the senior vice president and provost at the University of Guam and a WASC Senior College and University Commission commissioner - Pacific Basin.



services and offerings for our community. This amount will provide the funding we need next year to begin much-needed repairs of facilities that have been subjected to years of deferred maintenance, support academy quality and student success, provide fair and competitive pay for faculty and staff, and fill needed positions.

To assure financial sustainability, the university needs the latitude and flexibility to optimally support students' experiences and quality education. This includes support of academic excellence through qualified faculty and support staff, required labs and resources, and safe learning spaces. Sufficient budget and tuition revenue enable the university to achieve these financial sustainability requirements to support the academic enterprise.

From college students to professionals

Future employers and graduate school doctoral programs outside of UOG can be assured that a UOG diploma represents excellence and quality in academic standards and student experience.

Our Tritons are nurses, teachers, social workers, artists, business leaders, entrepreneurs, scientists, engineers, and also public servants. Our Tritons are drivers and proprietors of our island and region's social, cultural, and economic fabrics. They are taught to be critical thinkers, problem solvers, effective communicators, resourceful researchers, and team players.

UOG is intent on transforming the lives of our students and has achieved this, particularly for our island's first-generation students, providing them and their families with upward social and economic mobility. All students become agents of change and contributors to the progress and advancement of our communities.

UOG's mission of Ina, Deskubre, Setbe—To Enlighten, To Discover, To Serve—can't be done alone. As the premier U.S. regionally accredited institution of higher learning for Guam and the region, we need the support and engagement of our community and our island leaders to remain accessible and affordable. Biba UOG!

Three takeaways from Trump's historic arrest and arraignment

Since it became clear that Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg intended to charge Donald Trump with crimes growing out of hush money payments to Stormy Daniels, close observers have wondered how he would frame the offenses and solve the problems that apparently led him to mothball the indictment shortly after he took office. With Tuesday's dramatic arraignment of the former president, Bragg revealed his hand—except, in important ways, he didn't.

The indictment itself is about the least it could be—basically a recitation of 34 counts of falsifying business records that vary only by date. That is not necessarily a criticism: It's quite clear that Bragg made a strategic decision to sketch the contours of the basic charges and leave it to future proceedings to fill in the picture.

But along with the indictment, Bragg also filed a full-bodied statement of facts. It's not part of the indictment nor, a footnote makes clear, a complete recitation of evidence. But it nevertheless reveals answers to basic questions surrounding the case.

First, and most important, Bragg intends to prove the charges as an extended course of conduct—namely, as the statement says, "a catch-and-kill scheme to suppress negative information." In other words, the case is about much more than a payment of hush money to Stormy Daniels or the "accounting error" that Trump's allies are purporting it to be.

It is instead a whole series of allegations beginning in 2015 and involving several partners in crime—you might call them "co-conspirators" except that Bragg does not—for the very particular purpose of influencing the 2016 election. Bragg emphasized this in his news conference Tuesday, stating that the evidence would show Trump's motive "was to cover up

By **HARRY LITMAN**

Los Angeles Times

Harry Litman is the host of the "Talking Feds" podcast. @harrylitman



crimes relating to the 2016 election."

The scheme began, according to Bragg, with a meeting with the then-chief executive of the National Enquirer's parent company, David Pecker, and an agreement to help Trump's campaign by suppressing damaging stories. The statement refers to very strong evidence of this purpose, including the damning detail that Trump instructed his lawyer Michael Cohen that "if they could delay the payment [to Daniels] until after the election, they could avoid paying altogether, because at that point it would not matter if the story became public."

This underscores why Pecker was the last substantive witness we know to have testified before the grand jury. It's likely he will be the second most important witness after Cohen.

Second, anticipating criticism for charging 34 instances of falsification of business records, Bragg stressed that Manhattan is the financial center of the world and accurate bookkeeping therefore must be enforced. Falsifying such records in New York is a felony provided it's done to further other crimes, and Bragg chose not to specify what he alleges those crimes were within the indictment.

Making Money on Christ's Crucifixion

LITERARY NOOK

By **JOEY CONNOLLY**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka Pepe Batbon Connolly is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.



Joey aka Pepe Batbon Connolly is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.

A rhyming review of the film *The Passion of the Christ*, written on April 22, 2004, and published in the *Saipan Tribune*.

Cashing in on Christ's Crucifixion

Well, Mel Gibson's movie came and it went
it caused a few to reflect and a few to repent
filled with gratuitous violence and Biblical blunders
it was a box office smash—a wonder of wonders

The biggest movie about Jesus in many many years
had childish demons and Mary weeping glycerine tears
Gibson used a German mystic's vision to portray Christ's passion
with original spoken languages in current art film fashion

There couldn't have been more latex ripped flesh and stage blood
it was shown over and over as it came out in a flood
this action movie star turned director rubbed our faces in it
when money is to be made that's the way movie moguls will spin it

Again and again they hit Christ and did not stop
and kept spitting in his face to prevent a film flop
so now this blockbuster film replete with religiosity
is destined to become a 'snuff film' curiosity

Passion was toppled at the box office by *Dawn of the Dead*
an old zombie movie remake—need any more be said
next on top was a comic book film called *Hellboy*
with more violent action to bring a sick kind of joy

Multiplexes worldwide overflowed with millions in cash
As people paid to watch more and more violent trash
those now weary of this egregious greedy gravity
can perhaps look forward to a new film of the Nativity.

As he pointed out, the law doesn't require him to.

But in his statement of facts and news conference, Bragg suggested that the other crimes are campaign finance violations, both (or either) federal and state. That will give rise to several significant legal disputes that are on the immediate horizon. Briefly, both state and federal campaign finance violations raise legal uncertainties about whether they are sufficient to make the falsification charges felonies. Bragg has the better arguments on these questions, but the indictment does nothing to put them to rest.






Prosecutors could also argue that the falsification furthered a conspiracy to influence an election by "unlawful means," which is a crime in New York. The fight here will be over what constitutes such unlawful means. Again, Bragg is well positioned, but Trump's lawyers can still make a forceful argument.

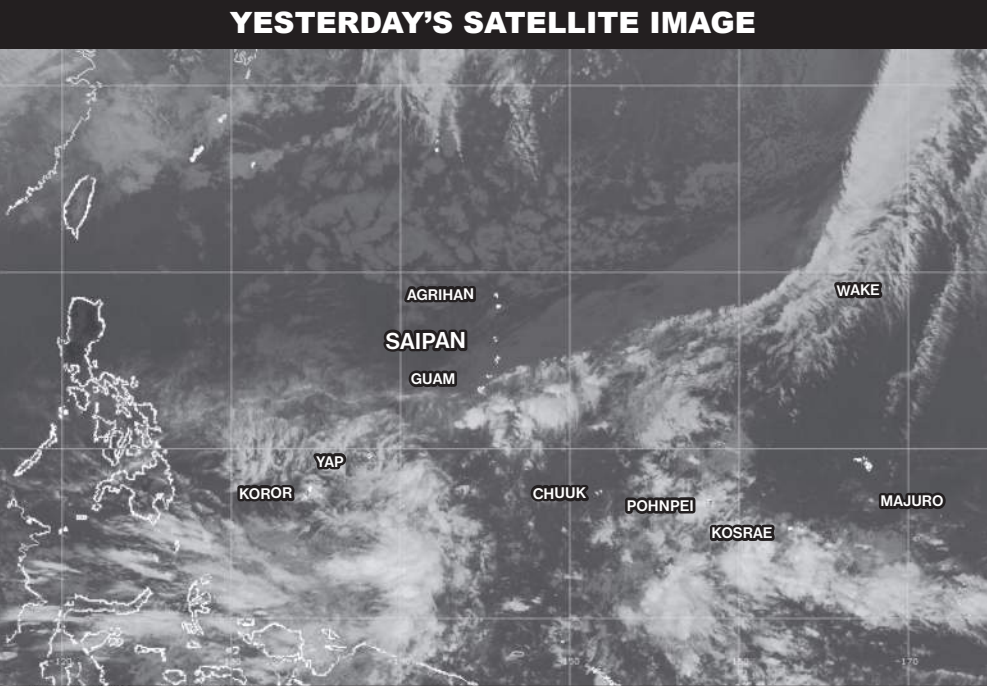
Third and finally, the skeletal nature of the indictment means we can expect a challenge—in legal terms, a "bill of particulars"—seeking to force the prosecution to flesh out the charges.

Bragg seems to have made a tactical decision to preserve maximum flexibility and make pivotal legal decisions no sooner than necessary. That could serve the prosecution well given that New York is sparing in permitting immediate appeals, which have often enabled Trump to delay accountability. The district attorney's strategy could help the trial reach a verdict sooner rather than wait for appeals to play out.

Bottom line: Bragg chose both to lay out the extent and gravity of Trump's offenses while also maintaining maximum flexibility to alter legal course. Given the unpredictable and hugely challenging nature of this historic case, that's a sensible approach.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY		TUESDAY	
									
Showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm. Cloudy		Scattered showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy		A 30 percent chance of showers. Partly sunny		A chance of showers. Partly sunny		Mostly sunny	
85°	76°	85°	76°	86°	76°	86°	76°	87°	77°



PICTURE TIME: 10:11 AM, THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Guam Doppler weather radar shows scattered showers east of Guam and Rota, with isolated showers around Tinian and Saipan. The buoys reveal combined seas of 9 to 11 feet composed of a large north swell, a smaller east trade-wind swell, and wind waves from the northeast.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA			▲▼°F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	87° / 78°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	87° / 78°	
Yap	Partly Cloudy	86° / 79°	
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	85° / 79°	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°	
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	87° / 77°	
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	87° / 77°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:08 AM	6:30 PM
Saturday	6:08 AM	6:30 PM
Sunday	6:07 AM	6:30 PM
Monday	6:06 AM	6:30 PM
Tuesday	6:05 AM	6:30 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	6:40 AM	7:27 PM
Saturday	-	7:19 AM	8:21 PM
Sunday	-	8:01 AM	9:18 PM
Monday	-	8:49 AM	10:19 PM
Tuesday	-	9:42 AM	11:21 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲▼°F
Auckland	Showers	70° / 60°	
Beijing	Sunny	61° / 40°	
Hong Kong	Cloudy	74° / 67°	
Honolulu	Windy	77° / 66°	
London	Cloudy	52° / 50°	
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	75° / 52°	
Manila	Partly Cloudy	98° / 76°	
Melbourne	Rain	64° / 57°	
Miami	Partly Cloudy	80° / 74°	
New York	Thundershowers	74° / 50°	
Osaka	Rain	65° / 52°	
Paris	Partly Cloudy	57° / 40°	
Busan	Mostly Sunny	65° / 42°	
Rome	Sunny	55° / 34°	
Salem	Showers	74° / 44°	
San Francisco	Mostly Cloudy	58° / 51°	
Seoul	Showers	57° / 35°	
Tokyo	Showers/Wind	69° / 60°	
Washington, DC	Thunderstorms	85° / 50°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
2:21 AM	Low Tide	0.61	
8:06 AM	High Tide	1.86	
2:44 PM	Low Tide	0.22	
8:58 PM	High Tide	1.85	

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF APRIL 1, 2023							
DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	7:25AM	9:55AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	1:50AM+1 2, 4, 7	
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily	UA184	10:25PM	4:15AM+1 1, 3, 4, 6, 7	
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau	UA189	10:25PM	6:10AM+1 2, 5 via Palau	
UA183	7:15PM	9:10PM	Daily	PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1 Daily	
				UA192	11:50PM	5:35AM+1 2, 5	
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam	UA184/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam	
UA117/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	UA192/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1 2, 5 via Palau, Guam	
				UA184/174	11:50PM	8:45AM+1 2, 5 via Guam	
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	1, 4, 5, 7	7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
TW9308	3:45AM	7:30AM	4, 7	TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1 3, 4, 6, 7	
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily	TW9307	9:00PM	2:45AM+1 3, 6	

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.									
FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022									
SAIPAN TO ROTA				ROTA TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY		
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily	3101	9:30	10:00	Daily		
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri	3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/		
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/				Sat/Sun		
			Sat/Sun	3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri		
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily	3103	16:30	17:00	Daily		
ROTA TO GUAM				GUAM TO ROTA					
LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY		
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri	4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri		
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				TINIAN TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY		
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily	2102	8:30	8:45	Daily		
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily	2103	9:30	9:45	Daily		
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily	2104	10:30	10:45	Daily		
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily	2108	14:30	14:45	Daily		
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily	2109	15:30	15:45	Daily		
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily	2110	16:30	16:45	Daily		
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily	2111	17:30	17:45	Daily		

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3rd OSS tests landing zone capabilities at home, Tinian



U.S. Air Force air traffic controllers and airfield management airmen assigned to the 3rd Operations Support Squadron pose for a group photo during Landing Zone Safety Officer training at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, March 23, 2023.

U.S. AIR FORCE/AIRMAN 1ST CLASS JULIA LEBENS

By **TECH. SGT. HAILEY STAKER**
JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska—What once was a four-strip, prepared airfield during World War II now sits overgrown and unused, with only two unimproved landing surfaces on Tinian in the Northern Mariana Islands. Now a tourist attraction, North Field is as close as Landing Zone Officers get to practicing establishing and operating a landing zone in an austere environment.

In early March, the 3rd Operations Support Squadron at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson sent personnel to participate in Exercise Agile Reaper 23-1 under the 3rd Air Expeditionary Wing to test their capabilities in an environment unlike home-station. And for the first time ever in Alaska, on March 23, the 3rd OSS took those same concepts and applied them to a landing zone training scenario to integrate LZOs and cargo aircraft pilots at their home-station airfield.

“Landing Zone Officers speak for the senior airfield authority, which is often the Joint Forces Air Component Commander in contingency environments, and ensure safe and effective ops at these locations,” said Capt. Daniel Brownley, the director of operations for the 3rd OSS Airfield Operations Flight. “There are specialists within the Air Force in the Contingency Response Group who do this kind of work. They pull air traffic controllers and airfield managers to run landing strips in austere environments and train them up. It’s a long, rigorous training program to get them doing what they do out there but they often return to the career field to never use

it again. Our goal is to adapt the CRG skillset so we can augment the Air Force’s contingency capabilities in a way that is sustainable within the Pacific Air Forces.

AR 23-1 allowed LZOs from JBER to put their home-grown skills into practice, testing their capabilities to support both fighter and cargo aircraft in contingency environments.

“Being that we’re in Alaska, we don’t get a lot of opportunities to have a working landing zone with the ground frozen and snowed over eight months out of the year,” said Tech. Sgt. Steven “Tepp” Tepperberg, a landing zone safety officer assigned to the 3rd OSS. “We took the opportunity [at Tinian] to train a few of our airfield ops airmen and

completed 12 low passes with a C-17 to get them qualified.”

After certifying three airmen during AR 23-1, Tepperberg returned to JBER to support the Airfield Operations Flight in its efforts to accomplish similar training on Elmendorf’s own runway, known as LZ Friday.

“The ‘LZ Friday’ event was the first time LZOs participated in Air Force airfield LZ ops here in Alaska, and we saw it as a springboard toward a recurring event that integrates more home-station and visiting aircrews into the kind of vital training that prepares us for the great power conflicts of the future,” Brownley said. “As the Air Force pivots from the kind of wars we’ve been fighting the last 20 years

and more, to what we now call the great power competition, we want to [capitalize on] the Multi-Capable Airman [framework] as it supports this transition.”

To do that, the 3rd OSS is taking personnel in its three highly technical, enlisted-only career fields—air traffic controllers, airfield managers and radar airfield and weather systems technicians—and certifying them as LZOs to ensure a secure and efficient airfield environment, regardless of location.

“We train each of those three enlisted Air Force Specialty Codes on how to maintain a secure and efficient airfield with maybe just a dirt strip, semi-prepared surface, or maybe it’s a paved strip,”

Brownley explained. “Whatever it is, that airfield manager role needs to be played by someone with the goal being to make these three specialties interchangeable, furthering the MCA framework for airfield operations.”

So, what do each of these specialized career fields do? Only within the last decade or so were RAWs technicians brought into the fold, according to Brownley, bringing the specialty codes to three.

Airfield management counter workers start out running daily airfield inspections while also handling coordination like filing flight plans on behalf of the flying units. They act as a liaison for many entities, as they ensure a safe and efficient airfield environment.

“We groom them for that very high-level job from day one,” Brownley said. “By the time you’re an airfield manager you are a liaison of a sort that operates very closely with the operations community. They’re a touchpoint for ops, they also work with the maintenance side, fire department, police and every other airfield user treats them as the go-between to operations.”

They’re also managing construction schedules, coordinating with civil engineers, writing parking plans and coordinating with any outside users of the airfield, Brownley added.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com



COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY (CPA)

Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950 • Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
Website: www.cnmports.com



AMENDED NOTICE TO BIDDERS

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY (CPA) is inviting qualified contractors to submit bid proposals and their qualifications for the **PORT OF SAIPAN BERTH 103 REPAIRS, Project No. CPA-SS-001-17**, for the island of Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Bidders are to submit one original and two copies of their bid which shall be sealed in an envelope and marked on the cover package outside as follows: **“PORT OF SAIPAN BERTH 103 REPAIRS, CPA-SS-001-17”** and submitted no later than **2:00 P.M. (CHST), FRIDAY, APRIL 14, 2023**, to the Office of the Executive Director, 2nd floor of the Arrival Terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, at which time and place the sealed proposals will be publicly opened and read. Bidders are requested to minimize their company’s attendees to ensure social distancing.

The Project, in general, consists of Berth 103 Cavity Repairs including all associated work, all in accordance with the Plans and Specifications.

The Project is being financed by the Commonwealth Ports Authority. The contract award, if it is to be made, will be made within one hundred twenty (120) calendar days from the receipt of bids. CPA reserves the right to hold such bids in effect for one hundred eighty (180) calendar days from the date of bid opening.

A DVD containing the Contract Documents including plans, specifications and the bid schedule, may be obtained at the CPA Accounting Office, 2nd floor of the Departure Terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, upon the payment of **TWO HUNDRED U.S. DOLLARS (\$200.00)** for each set of plans and documents in electronic form (DVD). The payment is nonrefundable unless this notice to bidders is cancelled. Payment shall be made in cash, credit card, cashier’s check or U.S. postal money order, made payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority. Bidders should notify CPA’s point of contact mentioned below immediately if there are issues retrieving the files on the DVD and are to verify all information using the specification table of contents and the index of drawings.

A pre-bid conference will be held at CPA’s Capt. George Fleming Memorial Building Conference Room at the Port of Saipan, located in Lower Base on the island of Saipan in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), at **10:00 A.M. (CHST), FRIDAY, MARCH 10, 2023**, to explain and clarify any questions regarding this project. Attendance is not mandatory. A site visit will follow the pre-bid conference. Bidders are requested to minimize their company’s attendees to ensure social distancing.

Questions should be submitted in writing to the CPA Executive Director’s Office, 2nd floor of the Arrival Terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or emailed to Ms. Wendi L. Prater, Executive Assistant/Project Manager at wprater@cnmports.com at least ten (10) days prior to the bid opening date; with the exception of extension requests which have no deadline. Responses to all questions and requests for information will be provided to all bidders who purchased a DVD and attended the pre-bid conference.

Bidders shall use the bid schedule form furnished by the Commonwealth Ports Authority on the DVD. Each bidder must also supply all supplemental information required in the specifications.

The contract period for construction of the project in its entirety shall be **FOUR HUNDRED TWENTY (420) calendar days**. Liquidated damages in the amount of **FIVE HUNDRED U.S. DOLLARS PER CALENDAR DAY (\$500.00)** shall be assessed the Contractor for each calendar day that the completion of the Project is delayed beyond the contract completion date without approved excuse.

The apparent low bidder will be subject to a thorough and comprehensive review of its qualifications and Bid Documents to ensure that they are “responsive and responsible.” This review will include, but is not necessarily limited to previous project experience, financial capabilities, quality of equipment and personnel, and bonding and insurance. If the apparent low bidder is found not to be “responsive or responsible”, their bid will be rejected and the next lowest bidder will be evaluated for qualifications.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals submitted for: (a) any of the reasons set forth in this Notice to Bidders; or (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding bid rejection or cancellation; (c) any calculation error made in the bid schedule or mis-entry of the quantity of line item; or (d) sufficient justification exists that awarding the project contract would not be in the best interest of CPA. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said bids if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA’s best interest.

Each bid shall be accompanied by either a bid bond by a U.S. Treasury listed or CPA approved surety company, a certified check, or a cashier’s check in the amount not less than ten percent (10%) of the bid price. Checks shall be made payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

All mechanics and laborers for this procurement project shall be paid no less than the minimum wage rate established by the CNMI or the U.S. Secretary of Labor, whichever is higher. A copy of the Department of the Federal Labor Wage Rate Determination is included in Section GP 70-26 of the specifications. The bidder shall take into account minimum wage increases that may be imposed in the CNMI over the life of the Contract and include associated costs in the bid proposal. The EEO requirements, labor provisions, and wage rates are included in the specifications.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority, in accordance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252, 42 USC §§ 2000d to 2000d-4) and the Regulations, hereby notifies all bidders or offerors that it will affirmatively ensure that any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprises will be afforded full and fair opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award.

By submitting a bid/proposal under this solicitation, the bidder or offeror certifies that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred or suspended by any Federal department or agency from participation in this transaction.

In addition to the above, all bidders shall comply with all local and Federal requirements under this procurement.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY:

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date: March 20, 2023

NOTICE OF INTENT TO FILE DISSOLUTION

Please take notice that West Technologies Incorporated Intends to file articles of dissolution with the CNMI Registrat of Corporations anytime after this notice made.

1. The claim shall be made in writing and shall state the name of the claimant. The amount of the claim, the factual basis for the claim and the name, mailing address, email address, and telephone number of the person who may be contacted by the corporation with respect to the claim.

2. The claim may be sent to: West Technologies Inc. PMB 761 Box 10005, Saipan MP 96950. Or email: westpac670@gmail.com

3. A claim against the corporation will be barred unless a processing to enforce the claim is commenced with five years after the publication of the notice.

**West Technologies Inc,
PMB 761 Box 10005, Saipan, MP 96950**



JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

McKinley Care Assisted Living, Anchorage Alaska seeks experienced caregivers. \$16-20/ hour base pay. Flight to Alaska paid. Housing assistance provided. Call 907-531-6078 or email Shaw Reyes at shaw@mckinley.care.

Island Snapshots



THANK YOU

The CNMI Women's Association, Women's Affairs Office under the Office of the Governor and our Partnering Agencies extend our heartfelt *olomwaay, si yu'us ma'ase* and thank you to our guests, emcee, panelists & sponsors for the success of this year's 9th Annual CNMI Women's WELLNESS Summit! Happy Easter CNMI! Photo shows attendees of the 9th Annual CNMI Women's WELLNESS Summit at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center, Susupe on March 31, 2023

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PREVENTION

Acting Gov. David M. Apatang, joined by Department of Community and Cultural Affairs Secretary Mary S. Sablan, Division of Youth Services administrator Vivian T. Sablan, DCCA, DYS, local dignitaries, and members of the community, proclaimed the month of April as Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention & Awareness Month with this year's theme "Building Together: Prevention in Partnership."

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR



COPE NORTH 23

U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Micheal Schuette, 133rd Contingency Response Team, downloads a fire truck from a C-130 Hercules in the CNMI last Feb. 13, 2023. Cope North 23 enhances U.S. relationships with our regional allies and partners by fostering the exchange of information and refining shared tactics, techniques, and procedures to better integrate multinational defense capabilities.

U.S. AIR FORCE/LT. COL. JASON CHRISTENSEN



U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Micheal Schuette, 133rd Contingency Response Team, offloads supplies from a Japanese UH-60 in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, Feb. 13, 2023.
U.S. AIR FORCE/LT. COL. JASON CHRISTENSEN



U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Micheal Schuette, 133rd Contingency Response Team, works with other contingency response members from Japan to offload a UTV in the CNMI last Feb. 13, 2023.
U.S. AIR FORCE/LT. COL. JASON CHRISTENSEN

Free webinar on federal contracting

The Guam Procurement Technical Assistance Center is offering free webinars this month. Webinars are held every Thursday from 10am to 11:30am via Zoom. Zoom links are emailed to all registered attendees 30 minutes before the webinar.

■ **April 13, 2023 – How to Register in SAM – Vendors need an active SAM registration to participate in Federal contracting. The Guam PTAC will take you through the new Entity Validation process, the actual SAM registration, and follow-up requirements. We will also discuss the new annual renewal process.**

■ **April 20, 2023 – Federal Contract Opportunities – SAM.gov is the portal for Federal Contract Opportunities. The Guam PTAC will show you how to use the website to ensure you do not miss any opportunities. Opportunity types, search filters, and search strategies will be discussed.**

■ **April 27, 2023 – Marketing to the Federal Government – The government buys products and services differently than the private sector. The Guam PTAC will discuss marketing strategies, essential documents, and how to get your company noticed by government buyers.**

Register on our website: <https://www.guamp-tac.com/news-and-events.php> (PR)

CUC ADVISORIES

Scheduled water service interruption for Dandan and Agag TSA

There will be a scheduled water service interruption for the area(s) listed below:

WEDNESDAY, April 12, 2023, for the Agag Tank Service Area

■ **Time:** 8:30am to 5pm

■ **Area(s) affected:** Residents living in As Teo

■ **Purpose:** The scheduled water outage will allow CUC’s contractor to complete work associated with the new generator building for the Donnie Springs Boosters Station.

■ **Roadway(s) affected:** The contractor will work on the shoulder of the north-bound lane on Santa Lourdes Road near CUC’s Donnie Springs Facility.

WEDNESDAY, April 12, 2023, for the Dandan Tank Service Area

■ **Time:** 8am to 5pm

■ **Area(s) affected:** Tun Herman Pan Rd. (Airport Road), As Perdido, Chalan Monsignor Martinez, from Shell Dandan to ABCD Market (partial areas of As Lito to Koblerville)

■ **Purpose:** The scheduled water outage is due to the connection of a new distribution line to an existing distribution line on Airport Road, the corner of Exploring Dr., and Lower Dandan.

■ **Roadway(s) affected:** Chalan Tun Herman Rd. (Airport Road), corner of Exploring Dr., and Lower Dandan

For the safety of our crew, motorists are advised to use caution while driving in the area.

For more information, contact the CUC Hotline at (670) 236-4333 or monitor our *Facebook* page for the latest updates (<https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/>).

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

NAME OF EMPLOYER: Pacific Marine Enterprises, Inc.

THE POSITION: Electrician

JOB DESCRIPTION: Installs and repairs electrical wiring, systems, equipment, or fixtures; Installs conduits and pipes to house electrical wires and cables; Ensures piping complies with electrical codes; Installs circuit breakers and other electrical hardware and connects wiring to them; Connects electrical systems to powerlines to provide electricity to buildings; Tests electrical systems to ensure proper installation and operation using testing devices, such as ohmmeters, voltmeters, or oscilloscopes; Inspects electrical systems to determine whether repairs are needed; Replaces conduit and wirings as needed; Replaces circuit breakers as needed; Inspects electrical systems, equipment, or components to identify hazards, defects, or the need for adjustment or repair, and to ensure compliance with codes; and Performs other related duties as assigned.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:

EDUCATION: Must be at least High School graduate


EXPERIENCE: Must have at least twenty-four (24) months of relevant work experience as Electrician.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: Ability to read blueprints; Knowledge of electrical systems and wirings; Ability to use hand tools and power tools measuring devices, power tools, and testing equipment, such as oscilloscopes, ammeters, or test lamps; Proficient in the use of test meters and other diagnostic equipment; Excellent analytical and problem-solving skills.

JOB SITE: Chalan Pale Arnold Papai Dr., As Mahetog, Tanapag, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

HOW TO APPLY: Submit or mail comprehensive resume, with supporting credentials, and application letter to:

DANILYN D. VARELA
General Manager
PACIFIC MARINE ENTERPRISES, INC.
Office Address: Chalan Pale Arnold Papai Dr., As Mahetog, Tanapag Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Mailing Address: PMB 181, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, MP 96950
Email Address: danilynvarela@outlook.com
Telephone Number: Tel. 1(670) 233-0744



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 23-058

Opening Date: Monday, March 27, 2023
Closing Date: Monday, April 10, 2023

POSITION TITLE:	Grants Writer
DEPARTMENT:	Executive Director/Grants Office
LOCATION:	Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA
ANNUAL SALARY:	\$37,756.00 - \$50,970.00 per annum, Exempt
CONTRACT:	Contracted
POSITION(S):	One (1)

The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation ("CUC") is seeking for a qualified Grants Writer. Under the direct supervision of the Grants Manager or his/her designee the responsibilities will be as follows:

Duties:

- Grant Writer is responsible to research on potential federal government agencies offering grants exclusively for utility-oriented project(s).
- Writes, edits, and proofreads proposals in accordance with grantor standards and requirements and in-line with utility milestones.
- Must work along-side Division Managers, Project Managers and/or Engineers in order to attain a comprehensive project proposal(s) meeting grant required standards.
- Maintain and track grant requests and reporting requirements.
- Maintains grant data and files regarding information about grantors, including contact information, requests for funding, reporting requirements, deadlines, and whether the requests are funded or not funded corresponding to existing funded or partially-funded projects.
- Corresponds with prospects and grantors, including following up to check on status of proposals and reporting back to them on their program investments.
- Coordinate with Grants Administrator in response to questions concerning grant requirements and compliance.
- Prepares accurate and timely progress report(s) and regularly informs Grants Administrator of project status and any deviation from established timeline or goals and for Executive Director monthly reporting.
- Should possess excellent writing and computer skills and database management skills.
- Must be highly organized with the ability to implement systems and follow-up processes, able to effectively work under pressure, use independent judgment and produce quality work product within tight time constraints.
- Previous experience will demonstrate a proven track record in securing new funding opportunities, comprehensive knowledge of research and the ability to distinguish and identify funding opportunities for special programs.
- Perform other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: Associates' Degree in Business Administration, Public Administration or directly related field and 4 years of experience in Grants and Grants Administration; or, an equivalent combination of education and experience sufficient to successfully perform the essential duties of the job such as those listed above
Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Human Resource principles and practices; Program administration principles; Customer service principles; Mathematical concepts; Research methods; Database and records management principles; Modern office technology.
Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Administering and monitoring programs, policies and processes; Coordinating the implementation of human resource services; Researching and analyzing program-related data and resource information; Providing customer service; Interpreting policies and providing relevant information and guidance; Prioritizing work in order to meet time-sensitive program deadlines; Tracking and auditing data, forms, records and documentation; Preparing reports, correspondence, and program support materials; Updating and maintaining information systems and confidential records; Coordinating and assisting with projects; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.


• **Licensing:**
o Valid CNMI Driver's License with appropriate class.


Physical Demands:
o Occasional lifting of objects, Subject to standing, walking, sitting, bending, reaching, kneeling, pushing and pulling.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

P. O. Box 501220, Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Fax: (670) 235-5131
CUC is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.





COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INVITATION FOR BID

CUC-IFB-23-006

Isley Field and Obyan Wells Granular Activated Carbon Water Filtration System Construction Project

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Isley Field and Obyan Wells Granular Activated Carbon Water Filtration System Construction Project for IF 208, OB 6, OB 19 and OB 23 in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists of the installation of Owner Furnished GAC units, chain link fence removal and installation of new chain link fence, connection of the new waterline to existing waterline, connection of the influent and effluent lines of the GAC units to the existing waterline.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Economic Development Authority (USEDA) and OIA. The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USED A and OIA.

CUC requires the project to be completed in **210 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The IFB package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$200.00 for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **March 31, 2023 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No. 17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid MUST be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-23-006, Isley Field and Obyan Wells Granular Activated Carbon Water Filtration System Construction Project"** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on April 25, 2023**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety.

A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.


All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on April 7, 2023** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email address, manny.sablan@cucgov.org, with a copy to Larry Manacop, Acting Chief Engineer, Water/Wastewater via email at larry.manacop@cucgov.org, Dennis Formalejo, Engineer, Senior via email at dennis.formalejo@cucgov.org and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Senior Administrative Technician via email address at christie.sablan@cucgov.org. CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in said bid proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator



Business

GRMC recaps on monthlong Mes CHamoru Celebration



PHOTOS BY GMRC

The fiesta was on at the Guam Regional Medical City's Mes CHamoru event last March 30.



Patient Exp-Customer Relations staff.

DEDEDO, Guam—Guam Regional Medical City (GRMC) concluded its Mes CHamoru festivities on Thursday, March 30, 2023, with a hospital-wide fiesta at its third-floor Healing Garden. The fiesta was one of many events that took place throughout March to celebrate the island's native culture and history.

Led by the GRMC's Morale Committee, the team planned culturally engaging activities at the end of each week for patients, visitors, and employees to enjoy.

Throughout the month, the Main Lobby echoed a mixture of local and CHamoru music, as those who entered were greeted by Customer Relations & Patient Experience Partners dressed in island wear. To the left of the Main Lobby, a small-scale model of a latte stone house—crafted by GRMC's Facilities team—could be seen and available for patients, visitors, and employees to take photos with.

Festivities commenced on



Guam L.E.A.F (Local.Eco.Alternative.Future) painted on biodegradable plates made out of dried palm leaves.

Wednesday, March 1st at the GRMC Main Lobby, where all were invited to an early afternoon of CHamoru music, merienda (light snack) of chicken kelaguen and titiyas, and a pop-up with local forever lei crafter, Håfa Leis.

On March 3rd, the hospital celebrated its first Håfa Adai Friday. Employees were encouraged to dress in cultural wear or island wear to show their 'Håfa Adai Spirit' every Friday in March, which would result in prizes for the best dressed. That same day, members of the Executive team and Morale Committee coursed throughout the hospital to reward employees with various gift cards, cash prizes, and treats in celebration of National Employee Appreciation Day.

On March 10th, The Coconut Tree Company, hosted a pop-up and provided coconut candy demonstrations in the morning and evening.

On March 17th, GRMC was joined by Sound Advice, a local musical duo comprised of vocalist Catherine Flores McCollum and keyboardist Del Damian, who performed live in the Main Lobby. Concurrently, employees and visitors enjoyed an art session with Guam L.E.A.F (Local.Eco.Alternative.Future), painting on biodegradable plates made out of dried palm leaves.

On March 24th, the Barcinas Sisters hosted a pop-up, featuring their local, hand-made jewelry, while hosting a weaving demonstration of various ornaments.

On March 30th, the day's festivities began with carabao rides with Latte the Carabao from Marquin Karetan Karabao Rides near the hospital's entrance. Shortly after, patients, visitors, and employees gathered to enjoy performances by the Guma' Mahiga Cultural Dance Group, who later brought up employees and visitors to join one of their dances.

GRMC senior vice presi-

dent and chief human resources officer Charlotte Huntsman says, "The annual Mes CHamoru event is a much anticipated one with our GRMC partners, especially the culmination of the event ending with a Guam fiesta! GRMC has employee partners from all over the world, and this is yet another way to show the hospitality and uniqueness of Guam, and most especially, GRMC!" (PR)

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Bob Lee, Cash App founder, fatally stabbed in San Francisco

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Bob Lee, a technology executive who created Cash App and was currently chief product officer of MobileCoin, was fatally stabbed in downtown San Francisco early Tuesday, according to the cryptocurrency platform and police. The San Francisco Police Department said in a statement that officers responded to a report of a stabbing near the city's Embarcadero waterfront at 2:35 a.m. Tuesday. They found Robert Lee, 43, suffering from apparent stab wounds. "Officers rendered aid and summoned medics to the scene" but Lee died at a hospital, police said. "This investigation is still in the early stages. Because of this we are not commenting on evidence, nor will we speculate on the circumstances surrounding this horrific crime," Police Chief Bill Scott said in the statement. MobileCoin confirmed Lee's death Wednesday in response to an email from The Associated Press. "Our dear friend and colleague, Bob Lee passed away yesterday at the age of 43, survived by a loving family and collection of close friends and collabora-

tors," MobileCoin CEO Josh Goldbard said in a statement.

Coal use climbs worldwide despite promises to slash it

The burning of coal for electricity, cement, steel and other uses went up in 2022 despite global promises to phase down the fuel that's the biggest source of planet-warming gases in the atmosphere, a report Wednesday found. The coal fleet grew by 19.5 gigawatts last year, enough to light up around 15 million homes, with nearly all newly commissioned coal projects in China, according to a report by Global Energy Monitor, an organization that tracks a variety of energy projects around the globe. That 1% increase comes at a time when the world needs to retire its coal fleet four and a half times faster to meet climate goals, the report said. In 2021, countries around the world promised to phase down the use of coal to help achieve the goal to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit). "The more new coal projects come online, the steeper the cuts and commitments need to be in the future," said Flora Champenois, the report's lead author and the project manager for GEM's Global Coal Plant Tracker. (AP)

To counter China, US trade rep seeks closer ties to allies

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Biden administration is pressing its case for a new approach to global trade, arguing that America's traditional reliance on promoting free trade pacts failed to anticipate China's brass-knuckled brand of capitalism and the possibility a major power like Russia would go to war against one of its trading partners.

In a speech Wednesday at

American University, U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai called for a strategy of what's known as "friend-shoring"—building up supply chains among allied countries and reducing dependence on geopolitical rivals such as China. Rising tension with Beijing and supply-chain bottlenecks arising from the COVID-19 pandemic have highlighted the risks of relying too

heavily on Chinese suppliers.

"Trade policy cannot solve all the wrongs in the world, but it can help more people both at home and abroad share the benefits of increasing economic growth," Tai said. "Let us not be content with reruns of the old. Let us write a new script for a brighter tomorrow."

The rethinking of trade goes beyond the simple is-

sue of lowering tariffs and signing broad pacts. In her speech, Tai noted the elimination of regulatory barriers last year that allowed U.S. farmers to export potatoes to Mexico, ongoing talks to form an Indo-Pacific Economic Framework that could possibly counter China in Asia, and the recent agreement on critical minerals with Japan.

Nation

Trump arrest prompts Jesus comparisons: ‘Spiritual warfare’

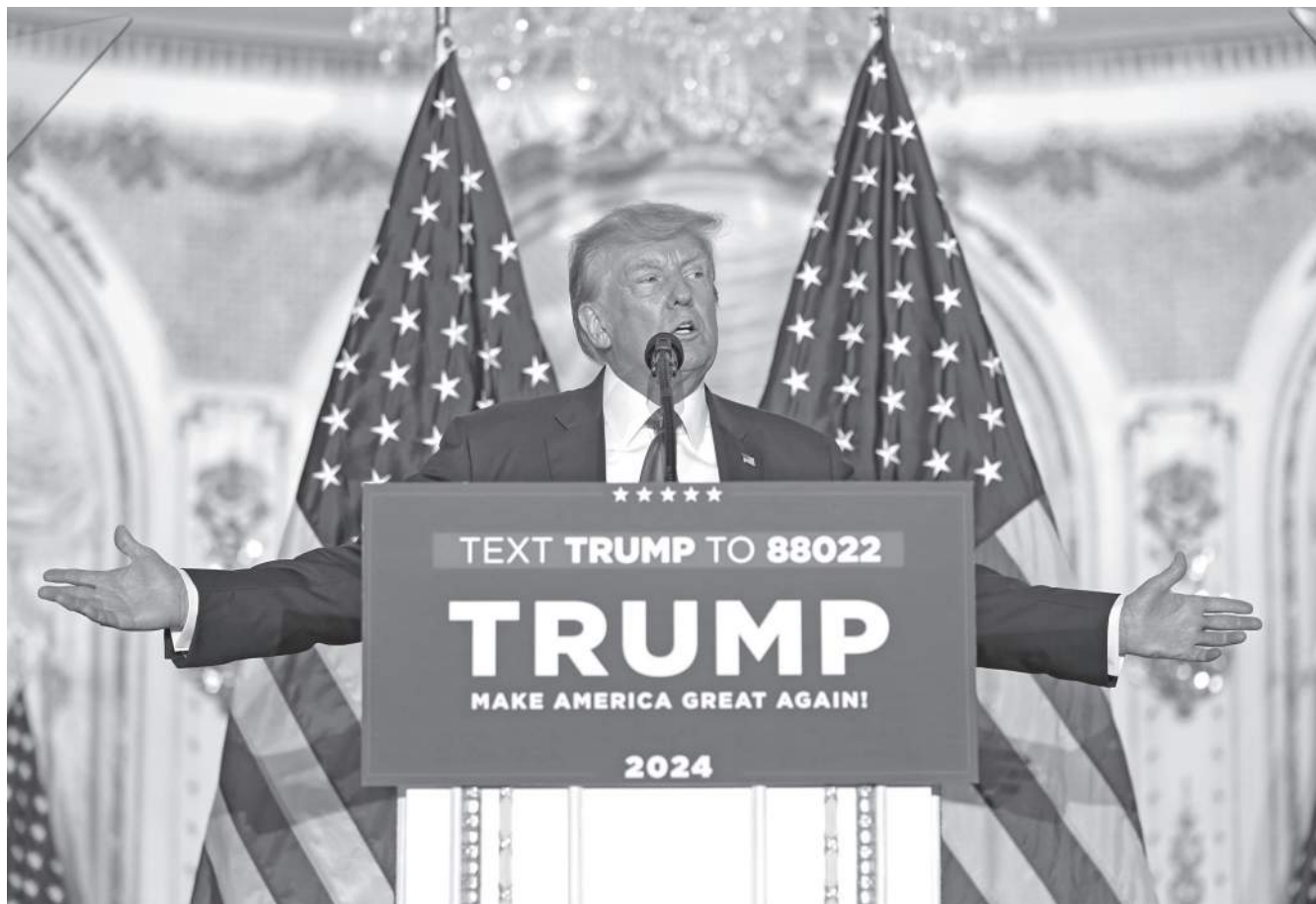
WASHINGTON (AP)—For the most devoted Trump conspiracy theorists, there are no coincidences and timing is everything.

So when ex-President Donald Trump was arraigned Tuesday on charges that he falsified business records to obscure hush money payments in an effort to influence the 2016 election, some of his most ardent followers quickly noted the court appearance came during Christianity’s most sacred week, Holy Week, when many Christians commemorate Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection.

“Seems there was someone else who was tortured and crucified this week,” read one post on Gab, a platform popular with Trump supporters. A similar post on Telegram put Trump’s case in apocalyptic terms: “Good vs Evil. Biblical times. Divine timing.”

Comparisons likening Trump to Christ were among the top online narratives about the Republican former president and his criminal charges circulating in the last several days, according to an analysis of online and social media content conducted by Signal Labs, a media intelligence firm, on behalf of The Associated Press.

Signal’s analysis found tens of thousands of mentions calling Trump a martyr. The number more than doubled im-



Former President Donald Trump speaks at his Mar-a-Lago estate Tuesday, April 4, 2023, in Palm Beach, Fla., after being arraigned earlier in the day in New York City.

mediately after Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., linked the prosecution of Trump to the persecution of Christ during an interview.

Trump pleaded not guilty on Tuesday to 34 felony counts alleging he hid payments made during his 2016

presidential campaign to two women — an adult-film actor and a former Playboy model — who claimed they had sexual encounters with him, as well as to a Trump Tower doorman who claimed to have a story about a child Trump fathered out of wedlock.

Greene, who traveled to New York City to protest Trump’s arraignment, noted the timing of the arraignment during a broadcast interview before bringing up the Christ comparison.

“Jesus was arrested and murdered by the Roman government,” she said. “There have been many people

throughout history that have been arrested and persecuted by radical corrupt governments, and it’s beginning today in New York City.”

The comparison was denounced by Episcopal Bishop Reginald T. Jackson, who oversees more than 500 churches in Greene’s home state and called her comments

blasphemous and disgusting.

“While Marjorie Taylor Greene may put her political loyalty ahead of God, Christians do not,” Jackson said. “Those of faith believe Christ always has, and always will, stand alone.”

Trump’s personal, political and professional history make him an odd choice to stand in for Christ, Christianity’s savior and central figure. Yet it’s an outgrowth from Christian nationalism, a movement that fuses traditional Christian themes and imagery with conservative candidates like Trump, according to John Fea, a historian at Messiah University in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, who has researched evangelical Christianity’s role in American history.

“They see this as spiritual warfare, and Trump is on the side of the angels,” Fea said. “In this view, Trump is politically a savior, he is going to restore America, and he will rise from the ashes in November despite the persecution and the suffering.”

Trump has encouraged such beliefs by claiming he is uniquely qualified to lead the country, by calling his 2024 campaign to retake the White House a “Final Battle” against his enemies and by praising QAnon, a movement that views him as a crusader against what it says is a secret, child-sacrificing cabal that controls world events.

GOP’s DeSantis visits Whitmer’s Michigan, the ‘anti-Florida’

LANSING, Mich. (AP)—Ahead of a highly anticipated presidential announcement, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis will visit Michigan for his first appearance this year in the state transformed by Democratic majorities under high-profile Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

The visit will put the contrasting leadership styles of the Republican and Democrat on display after they scored landslide 2022 reelection victories that vaulted them to be their parties’ brightest emerging stars.

In Florida, DeSantis and the GOP-dominated Legislature have moved the state further right, waging a culture war on what the governor has called “woke” agendas. In Michigan, Whitmer has led the way on codifying abortion rights and advancing sweeping gun reform with Democrats in full control for the first time in decades.

Whitmer has been a top ally to President Joe Biden and a kind of proxy for his leadership in their party — and what’s possible under Democrats. DeSantis is one of the

top potential candidates looking to unseat Biden next year.

Thursday’s visit is also one of DeSantis’s first out-of-state appearances since former President Donald Trump was indicted. With all eyes on Trump and his charges, it has been difficult for those vying for the GOP nomination to gain much notice.

Trump frequently targets DeSantis — a similarity that the governor shares with Whitmer, who Trump labeled “that woman from Michigan” during his presidency. Recently, Trump has ramped up his DeSantis criticism, saying during a rally in Waco on March 25 that the Florida politician was disloyal and “dropping like a rock.”

Potentially the fifth state to hold its Republican primary, Michigan could prove pivotal for the GOP presidential nomination winner. Michigan House Republican Speaker Bryan Posthumus flew to Florida in December to deliver a letter signed by 18 other state House Republicans encouraging DeSantis to run for president.

“When he becomes an ac-

tual candidate, I will be doing another letter saying we endorse you for President of the United States of America,” Posthumus told The Associated Press.

DeSantis will first travel Thursday morning to central Michigan to speak at a Midland County GOP event. State Rep. Bill G. Schuette, a Midland-area Republican, said the county party wanted to hear more about DeSantis’s perspectives and proposals, in comparison to Michigan, which Schuette described as the “anti-Florida.”

In the three weeks since Florida’s legislative session began, DeSantis has worked to expand the state’s so-called Don’t Say Gay law, ban diversity and equity programs at public universities and eliminate concealed carry restrictions. The state has also begun passing a six-week abortion ban backed by DeSantis.

“What Gov. DeSantis has done in Florida versus what Gov. Whitmer and the Democrats have done in Michigan is polar opposite,” Posthumus said.

Anti-vaccine activist RFK Jr. challenging Biden in 2024

NEW YORK (AP)—Democrat Robert F. Kennedy Jr., an anti-vaccine activist and scion of one of the country’s most famous political families, is running for president.

Kennedy filed a statement of candidacy Wednesday with the Federal Election Commission.

The 69-year-old’s campaign to challenge incumbent President Joe Biden for the Democratic nomination is a long shot. Self-help author Marianne Williamson is also running in the Democratic race.

Kennedy, a nephew of President John F. Kennedy and the son of his slain brother Robert F. Kennedy, was once a bestselling author and environmental lawyer who worked on issues such as clean water.

But more than 15 years ago, he became fixated on a belief that vaccines are not safe. He emerged as one of the leading voices in the anti-vaccine movement, and his work has been described by public health experts and even members of his own family as mis-

leading and dangerous.

Kennedy had been long involved in the anti-vaccine movement, but the effort intensified after the COVID-19 pandemic and development of the COVID-19 vaccine.

His anti-vaccine charity, Children’s Health Defense, prospered during the pandemic, with revenues more than doubling in 2020 to \$6.8 million, according to filings made with charity regulators.

His organization has targeted false claims at groups that may be more prone to distrust the vaccine, including mothers and Black Americans, experts have said, which could have resulted in deaths during the pandemic.

Kennedy released a book in 2021, “The Real Anthony Fauci,” in which he accused the U.S.’s top infectious disease doctor of assisting in “a historic coup d’etat against Western democracy” and promoted unproven COVID-19 treatments such as ivermectin, which is meant to treat parasites, and the anti-malaria drug

hydroxychloroquine.

His push against the COVID-19 vaccine has linked him at times with anti-democratic figures and groups. Kennedy has appeared at events pushing the lie that the 2020 presidential election was stolen and with people who cheered or downplayed the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

A photo posted on Instagram showed Kennedy backstage at a July 2021 Reawaken America event with former President Donald Trump’s ally Roger Stone, former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn and anti-vaccine profiteer Charlene Bollinger. All three have promoted the lie about the 2020 election being stolen.

Bollinger has appeared with Kennedy at multiple events. She and her husband sponsored an anti-vaccine, pro-Trump rally near the Capitol on Jan. 6. Bollinger celebrated the attack and her husband tried to enter the Capitol. Kennedy later appeared in a video for their Super PAC.

Asia

For McCarthy and Taiwan's leader, visit marks historic first

WASHINGTON (AP)—The moment was historic—a U.S. House speaker meeting Wednesday with the president of Taiwan for a rare visit on American soil, a high-profile encounter designed to boost support for the island government but already drawing blowback from an enraged China.

For Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen the meeting with House Speaker Kevin McCarthy at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in California was the most sensitive stop on her transit through the U.S. and Central America, a whirlwind diplomatic mission that is delicate, secretive and politically fraught.

But for the newly elected House speaker it would signal the start of his foray into foreign affairs. The Republican leader has focused more on domestic politics at home than international concerns abroad. Outspoken, even bellicose, against China, McCarthy chose to send a more measured and diplomatic nod of support to Taiwan with the meeting.

"It's a very good debut," said Newt Gingrich, the Republican former speaker who led a delegation to Taiwan decades ago and advises McCarthy.

"I think it's a useful thing to communicate to a country — that's under enormous pressure — that they have real



House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., right, shakes hands with Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen after delivering statements to the press after a Bipartisan Leadership Meeting at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, Calif., Wednesday, April 5, 2023. AP

allies," Gingrich said ahead of the meeting. The Taiwanese, he said, will "see it as a morale boost."

The private meeting between Tsai and McCarthy came against the very public backdrop of heightened U.S. focus on China over its actions at home and abroad, particularly China's potential aggression enforcing its claims over

the island of Taiwan.

The Biden administration is watching China's interactions with Russia vis-a-vis the war in Ukraine, while Congress is probing China over a host of issues, from the Chinese spy balloon that floated over North America earlier this year to the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic to Chinese social media giant TikTok's

data privacy practices.

The United States broke off official ties with Taiwan in 1979, when it formally established diplomatic relations with the Beijing government. While the U.S. ac-

knowledges the "one-China" policy in which Beijing lays claim to the island of Taiwan as territory, the U.S. does not endorse China's claim to the island and remains Taiwan's key provider of military and

defense assistance.

The session with McCarthy, who as House speaker is second in line of succession to the president, was Tsai's most high-level U.S. visit during her visit, which also included a stop in New York last week. At that time, she met Friday with three U.S. senators—Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, Dan Sullivan, R-Alaska, and Mark Kelly, D-Ariz., all members of the Senate Armed Services Committee—and with House Democratic leader Rep. Hakeem Jeffries.

Details on the event Wednesday, which included a bipartisan showing of Republican and Democratic lawmakers, had been closely held, a reminder of the pressures on her island government under the watchful eye of China.

It was the first known visit between a House speaker and a Taiwan president on American territory since the U.S. broke off formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan, experts said.

"It's particularly an opportunity to demonstrate how strong the relationship with the United States is," said Bonnie S. Glaser, the managing director of the Indo-Pacific program at the German Marshall Fund.

North Korea warns 'offensive action' over allies' drills

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea on Thursday threatened unspecified "offensive action" over the expansion of U.S. military exercises with rival South Korea as President Joe Biden's special representative for North Korea flew to Seoul for talks with allies over the North's growing nuclear threat.

The North Korean comments came a day after the United States flew nuclear-capable B-52 bombers to the Korean Peninsula for joint aerial exercises with South Korean warplanes in their latest show of force against the North, which portrays the allies' drills as invasion rehearsals. Animosity heightened in recent weeks as the pace of both the U.S.-South Korean military exercises and the North Korean weapons demonstrations increased in a cycle of tit-for-tat.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency said the United States and South Korea's military exercises and the

deployment of advanced U.S. military assets have turned the Korean Peninsula into a "huge powder magazine, which can be detonated any moment."

"The military provocations by the U.S.-led warmongers have gone beyond the tolerance limit. This reality awaits more explicit stand and answer of (North Korea's) defense capabilities," KCNA said in a commentary attributed to a scholar.

"(North Korea's) war deterrence will continue to show its responsibility for and confidence in its crucial mission through offensive action," it said.

KCNA's commentary came as Sung Kim, the U.S. special representative to North Korea, arrived in Seoul for talks with South Korean and Japanese officials to coordinate their response to North Korea's intensifying weapons development and threats of nuclear conflict.

Following meetings with South Korean Foreign Minister Park Jin and other South

Korean officials on Thursday, Kim will take part in a three-way meeting with the South Korean and Japanese nuclear envoys on Friday, according to South Korea's Foreign Ministry.

Kim on Thursday separately met with South Korean Foreign Minister Park Jin and chief South Korean nuclear negotiator, Kim Gunn, where they discussed strengthening joint defense postures and inducing further international efforts to crack down on illicit North Korean activities funding its weapons program, Seoul's Foreign Ministry said.

Sung Kim and Kim Gunn during their meeting stressed the need to encourage countries to tighten their enforcement of U.N. Security Council sanctions against North Korea, including a requirement to repatriate North Korean laborers dispatched overseas, considering the possibility of North Korea reopening its borders as COVID-19 fears ease.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Avalanche sweeps away tourists in northeast India; 7 killed

NEW DELHI (AP)—An avalanche swept away a group of tourists in the Himalayas in northeastern India on Tuesday, killing at least seven and injuring 11, officials said. Army spokesperson Lt. Col Mahendra Rawat said rescuers pulled out at least 23 tourists from the snow and took them to a hospital for treatment. India's Border Roads Organization said the tourists were hit by the avalanche near the Nathu La mountain pass in Sikkim state. A video released by the Indian army showed rescuers digging through the snow to find an undetermined number of missing people swept away by the avalanche down a mountain slope. Nathu La mountain pass is along the border with China and is a major tourist destination. The ecologically sensitive Himalayan region, which has been severely affected by global warming, is prone to avalanches. Last year 27 trainee mountaineers were killed in an avalanche in the northern Uttarakhand region.

Foreign veterinarians save sick elephant at Pakistani zoo

KARACHI, Pakistan (AP)—Veterinarians said they performed a critical procedure to save a sick elephant at a zoo in southern Pakistan on Wednesday. Noor Jehan, 17, was brought to Karachi with three other elephants more than a dozen years ago. Videos of her leaning her head against a tree and struggling to stand have caused alarm in Pakistan. The elephant is experiencing a number of health issues, including arthritis. An eight-member team from the Austrian animal welfare organization Four Paws

did the complex procedure with the help of a crane and a fire truck. "We nearly lost her when we gave her sedation, but luckily we had all the necessary preparations, and Noor Jehan stood up again," said Dr Amir Khalil, who led the team. The experts did an ultrasound and found a large hematoma in her abdomen, which is affecting her organs. "The good news is that there is treatment for this, but it requires a lot of work and some luck in the coming days," Khalil said. "However, Noor Jehan is still young, and she deserves to live another 20 or 30 years."

Thai police say Chinese church members to be deported soon

BANGKOK (AP)—More than 60 self-exiled members of a Chinese Christian church who were detained in Thailand after receiving U.N. refugee status will be deported by next week, probably to a third country, officials said Wednesday. Deputy national police chief Surachate Hakpam said representatives of Thailand's Foreign Ministry and Immigration Bureau were holding talks with the U.N. Refugee Agency and the U.S. Embassy to discuss the fate of the 63 members of the Shenzhen Holy Reformed Church who were taken to court in the coastal city of Pattaya last Friday. "Within the next week, they will definitely be deported. What we don't know is which country they will be deported to," Surachate told The Associated Press. The members of the church, also known as the Mayflower Church, were granted refugee status by the U.N. agency after their arrival in Thailand last year. They say they faced unbearable harassment in China and are seeking asylum in the United States.

World

Putin: West helped Ukraine mount acts of sabotage

MOSCOW (AP)—Russian President Vladimir Putin charged Wednesday that Western intelligence agencies have helped Ukraine carry out acts of sabotage, as he urged his officials to mount a stronger response.

Putin spoke during a call with members of his Security Council that focused on efforts to shore up control of the four Ukrainian provinces that Russia claimed as part of its territory in September — a move that most of the world rejected as an illegal annexation.

“There are reasons to believe that the capabilities of third countries, Western special services, have been involved in preparation of acts of sabotage and terror attacks,” Putin said, without elaborating and without providing any evidence.

He said the four provinces have experienced Ukrainian shelling and acts of sabotage aimed at scaring the local population, and that Russian authorities must act “harshly and effectively to ensure control over the situation.” Several Moscow-appointed officials in the newly incorporated provinces were killed and wounded in a slew of bombings and other attacks.

Putin urged officials to



AP
Russian President Vladimir Putin delivers a speech as he attends a ceremony to receive credentials from newly appointed foreign ambassadors to Russia, at the Kremlin, in Moscow, Russia, Wednesday, April 5, 2023.

strengthen efforts to fully integrate the four provinces into Russia and to protect their residents from Ukrainian attacks.

“They must see and feel that all our great country stands behind them and we will do everything to protect them,” Putin said in televised remarks at the meeting.

When Putin sent troops into Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, he charged that Russia’s “special military operation” was intended to “demilitarize” Ukraine, block its potential accession to NATO and to protect the country’s Russian speakers.

Ukraine and its allies have described the Russian

leader’s stated rationale as a cover for an unprovoked act of aggression.

After failing to capture Kyiv, Ukraine’s capital, in the initial weeks of the fighting, Russia has focused its military efforts on gaining control of the Donbas, Ukraine’s industrial heartland. The region includes two of the annexed provinces, Donetsk and Luhansk.

The Russian military captured Kherson province and part of Zaporizhzhia province in southern Ukraine early in the conflict but withdrew its troops from the city of Kherson and nearby areas

on the western bank of the Dnieper River in November under the brunt of a Ukrainian counteroffensive.

Earlier Wednesday, Putin received credentials from foreign ambassadors, including the newly appointed U.S. ambassador, Lynne M. Tracy. Speaking at that Kremlin meeting, Putin charged that Washington’s support for mass 2014 protests in Kyiv that ousted Ukraine’s Moscow-friendly president lay at the roots of the current conflict.

“The relations between Russia and the United States, which directly impact global

stability and security, are in a deep crisis,” he said. “It’s rooted in principally different approaches to shaping the modern world order.”

Putin also hosted President Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus on Wednesday for talks on expanding ties between their countries.

“We have achieved a lot by working together in all areas,” Putin said at the start of the meeting. “It refers to our cooperation on the international arena and to us working together on issues related to ensuring our countries’ security.”

Putin said last month that Russia planned to station tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus, its neighbor and ally. The announcement marked another attempt by the Russian leader to dangle the nuclear threat to discourage the West from supporting Ukraine.

Putin has said that construction of storage facilities for tactical nuclear weapons would be completed in Belarus by July 1. Russia also has helped modernize Belarusian warplanes to make them capable of carrying nuclear weapons and provided the country that borders Ukraine with Iskander short-range missiles that could carry a nuclear warhead, he said.

Belarus and Russia have an agreement envisioning close economic, political and military ties. Russia used Belarusian territory as a staging ground for invading Ukraine and has maintained a contingent of troops and weapons there.

As Finland joins its ranks NATO ponders Ukraine's prospects

BRUSSELS (AP)—As Finland joined NATO this week, casting aside a history of military nonalignment, a small but noisy group of Ukraine supporters outside the security fence at the alliance’s headquarters used a loudspeaker system to chant “Ukraine needs NATO,” “Ukraine in NATO,” and “Ukraine needs fighter jets.”

Russia’s war on Ukraine has driven Finland into NATO’s ranks to benefit from its security guarantee that an attack on any one of the now-31 member countries will be met with a response from them all. Sweden, Bosnia, Georgia and — most urgently — Ukraine, want in, too.

At their summit in Lithuania on July 11-12, U.S. President Joe Biden and his counterparts want to offer Ukraine something more, something stronger, in line with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s expectations more than a year into a war that has killed tens of thousands and driven millions from their homes. The question, NATO diplomats say, is: What, exactly?

The problem is simple. Most of NATO’s bigger member nations believe that a country should not be brought into the fold while it is fighting a war. What Ukraine would join? What would its borders look like? Would Zelenskyy agree to join without the occupied Crimea and Donbas?

Some countries, closer to Russia’s borders and all too aware of their own troubled histories with their giant neighbor, would back Ukraine’s membership application now.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, who walks a wobbly plank as he attempts to speak for 31 allies with diverse positions that only take decisions unanimously, says the equation is simple: There is no point in talking about joining if Russia takes Ukraine.

“Ukraine will become a member of the alliance,” Stoltenberg told reporters on Tuesday. “At the same time, we all realize that to make any meaningful progress on this issue, the first step is to ensure that

Ukraine prevails as a sovereign, independent nation.”

According to the organization’s estimates, NATO and its allies have delivered close to 150 billion euros (\$164 billion) in support to Ukraine since Russia invaded in February 2022. That ranges from financial backing to field assistance including generators, fuel, tents and medical aid.

Some of the members, bilaterally or in groups, have supplied around 65 billion euros’ (\$71 billion) worth of military equipment: air defense systems, anti-tank weapons, artillery shells and tanks. Poland and Slovakia have even agreed to send Soviet-era jets that Ukrainian pilots are trained on.

NATO, as an organization, does not provide weapons to Ukraine. It’s a line the 31 allies refuse to cross together. They are wary of being drawn into a wider war with nuclear-armed Russia. Instead, they defend NATO’s own borders, to dissuade President Vladimir Putin from expanding his war.

Israeli strikes on Syria intensify, raise tensions with Iran

BEIRUT (AP)—Suspected Israeli airstrikes in Syria in recent weeks have killed two Iranian military advisers, temporarily put the country’s two largest airports out of service, and raised fears of regional escalation.

While Israel has fought a shadow war with Iran in Syria for years, it has intensified recently, with near-daily airstrikes attributed to Israel by Syrian officials over the past week.

The escalation of attacks comes after what appears to be a rare infiltration by an armed man from Lebanon into Israel and Iran’s reconciliation with regional rival Saudi Arabia last month. It also comes against the backdrop of a major domestic crisis in Israel over Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s government plan to overhaul the judiciary.

Israel, which has vowed to stop Iranian entrenchment in neighboring Syria, has carried out hundreds of strikes on targets in government-controlled parts of that country in recent years — but rarely acknowledges them. Since the beginning of 2023, Syrian officials have attributed 10 strikes on Syrian territory to Israel, including four airstrikes within five days as of Tuesday.

The United States, Israel’s closest ally, has had its own recent run-ins with Iranian forces in Syria. In late March, U.S. forces retaliated with airstrikes on sites in Syria used by groups affiliated with Iran’s Revolutionary Guard following a suspected Iran-linked drone attack that killed a U.S. contractor and wounded six other Americans in northeast Syria. An official with an Iranian-backed group in Iraq said the U.S. strikes killed

seven Iranians.

The flareup between the U.S. and Iran did not escalate, but some fear the back-and-forth between Israel and Iran could.

Since the early years of Syria’s 12-year-old conflict, Iran has deployed hundreds of military advisers as well as thousands of Iran-backed fighters from countries including Iraq and Lebanon who helped tip the balance of power in President Bashar Assad’s favor. Iran-backed fighters are deployed in different parts of Syria.

Israel has long considered Iran to be its top enemy, citing Iranian calls for Israel’s destruction, its support for anti-Israel militant groups like Hezbollah and its nuclear program. Israel and Western countries say Iran is trying to develop a nuclear weapons — a charge Iran denies.

Off The Wall

Japan police arrest 2 in food prank at beef bowl diner

TOKYO (AP)—Japanese police have arrested two men who posted a video on social media showing one eating pickled ginger with his chopsticks directly from a communal container at a famous beef bowl restaurant chain, part of a series of pranks that have hit sushi chains and became known as “sushi terrorism.”

Osaka prefectural police on Wednesday said Ryu Shimazu and Toshihide Oka were arrested on suspicion of obstructing business and destroying and dirtying property.

In a video shot by Oka and shared on social media, Shimazu is seen holding a

condiment container up to his face and shoveling pickled ginger—a popular topping for beef bowls—into his mouth with his chopsticks. Customers are supposed to use an attached serving utensil to add ginger to their food.

Shimazu told police that he wanted to make people laugh. Oka said he had encouraged Shimazu to do something funny, and he shared the video because it was funny and he wanted people to see it, police said, adding that they had nothing against the restaurant.

Police arrested Shimazu, 35, in March, and Oka, 34, this week, officials said. Both

admitted the charges against them. If convicted of obstructing business, they could face up to three years in prison and a fine of up to 500,000 yen (\$3,800), and for property destruction, up to three years’ imprisonment and a fine of up to 300,000 yen (\$2,280).

Their prank surfaced in February when a customer notified the chain about the video, prompting the restaurant to temporarily close to discard all its ginger and clean its containers, police said. Yoshinoya also reported the video to police.

Police identified the restaurant only as part of the Yo-

shinoya chain in the Suminoe district of Osaka.

Yoshinoya Holdings said it was regrettable that the news of the prank caused discomfort for many customers and raised questions over the safety of the entire food industry, Kyodo News reported.

Yoshinoya operates more than 1,100 outlets nationwide. Its reasonably priced specialty, gyudon, or rice topped with soy sauce-flavored beef and onion, is a popular meal.

The incident at its restaurant came just weeks after a series of pranks at sushi chains that

became known as “sushi terrorism.” In one case, police in February arrested three people on suspicion of obstructing business by licking the top of a communal soy sauce container and grabbing sushi by hand from a revolving con-

veyor belt at a restaurant in central Japan.

Other sushi chains were also hit by similar pranks. Some have installed video cameras to monitor customers or even halted their sushi-serving conveyor belts.

Spoon spotted: Arizona Dairy Queen’s big red spoon found



This photo provided by Michael Foster shows a 15-foot red spoon lying behind a fence in Phoenix on Monday, April 3, 2023. **AP**

PHOENIX (AP)—A giant red spoon that was stolen from an Arizona Dairy Queen and sparked a mystery on social media was found Monday morning, and it’s partly thanks to Pokémon GO.

Michael Foster, 52, was playing the outdoor mobile game when he spotted the 15-foot (4.5-meter) spoon around 7 a.m. It was lying on the ground behind a fence that surrounds a Phoenix middle school baseball field, just 2 miles (3 kilometers) from the scene of the heist.

“The first thing I did was send a picture to my wife and I said, ‘It’s the spoon.’ She said call the police,” Foster told The Associated Press.

“I can confirm the Dairy Queen ‘red spoon’ was located and recovered this morning,” Sgt. Brian Bower said in an email Monday.

Detectives are continuing to search for the suspects who took the spoon, he added. Police are encouraging the public to submit any tips.

A school maintenance man came over and pushed it over the fence to Foster, who handed it to Phoenix police.

“I set it down. They actually did the lifting after we got it over the fence,” Foster said. “They strapped it to the top of a police cruiser.”

Foster said nobody else was around and the school was just opening when he saw it.

“I did kind of look around and was like ‘What?’ One guy did finally come by and was like, ‘Is that what I think

it is?’ Yeah, that’s the spoon,” Foster said.

Phoenix police over the weekend released surveillance footage from March 25 that showed two men and one woman get the spoon out of its base and put it on a large flatbed connected to a pickup truck.

Owners Raman and Puja Kalra said last week that they hoped to get it back. Getting another spoon made, delivered and then installed would cost over \$7,000. They even resorted to creative strategies such as printing T-shirts for staff that said “Where’s My Spoon?”

Raman Kalra confirmed Monday in an email he was on his way to pick up the spoon from police.

“We are happy to have our spoon back and we are looking forward to the neighborhood creating more smiles and stories with this now world-famous spoon,” he said.

Dairy Queen is known for doling out plastic red spoons with their soft serve Blizzards. The Dairy Queen where the theft happened is the only Arizona location with a large red spoon. It’s been a popular Instagram photo spot.

The couple, who own 34 locations, also offered a reward of free Blizzard treats for anyone who helped facilitate the spoon’s return.

Foster said he doesn’t need a reward.

“Honestly, we’re just glad they’re gonna get their spoon back,” he said.

Circle back: Maine claims biggest ice disk, at 1,776 feet

MADAWASKA, Maine (AP)—Volunteers cut a big ol’ circle in a frozen lake and set it in motion, claiming a world record in a category that few people know exists: The biggest ice carousel.

With a diameter of 1,776 feet—or 541 meters—the giant piece of ice estimated at 146,000 tons moved slowly like a Lazy Susan to hoots, hollers and high fives on Saturday.

Northern Maine Ice Busters had to cut through ice nearly 30 inches thick on a path painstakingly measured by survey crews to create a perfect circle measuring nearly six football fields across.

It’s a laborious-but-fun way to provide entertainment during the long, cold winter, and it has turned into something of a rivalry in places like Finland, Minnesota and Maine. There’s even a World Ice Carousel Association.

“It’s a friendly competition,” said John Mazo, media liaison for the Northern Maine Ice Busters.

On Saturday, it took a herculean effort to get the giant disk moving with 10 outboard boat engines, farm equipment driving oversized propellers, and a couple of wheeled ve-



This photo provided by Aroostook UAS shows a giant ice disk that measures 1,776 feet – or 541 meters – is seen on the day it was set in motion, creating the world’s largest ice carousel, on Saturday, April 1, 2023, in Long Lake in Madawaska, Maine. **AP**

hicles, too, he said.

Chuck Zwilling, of Little Falls, Minnesota, was there to help. And he said he and his family and volunteers back home will create an even bigger one to keep the competition going.

But first, Zwilling said, he has to identify a lake that is large enough. Green Prairie Fish Lake, used for the previous record, is too small for 2,000-foot diameter ice disk that he envisions.

“It’s the land of 10,000 lakes in Minnesota, so we have many options,” he joked.

No April Fools’ prank: Jogger has close encounter with cow

FARMINGTON, Maine (AP)—A Maine jogger encountered an angry cow, and it was no joke.

The Farmington Police Department shared details of the encounter on April Fools’ Day, a day after the actual encounter, and assured that this was no prank.

The 43-year-old woman was preparing for a jog on the Whistle Stop Trail when

she was charged by the cow, which had escaped from a farm. The cow lifted her off the ground with its horns, causing a cut that required stitches, before the jogger escaped, police said.

The bovine’s owner was contacted and secured the animal, along with a pig that had escaped. The matter was forwarded to the district attorney for review.

Officers ‘arrest’ alligator walking near Tampa Bay stadium

TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—Tampa police officers were called to a commercial part of town because of a disturbance, but it wasn’t a public brawl or anyone behaving in a disorderly manner. It was a 9-foot (2.7-meter) alligator Wednesday night ambling down a street not far from Raymond James Stadium, home of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

The urban gator whipped its tail several times when an officer first approached it, pok-

ing with an outstretched baton. A half dozen officers along with a crowd of spectators watched as lights from squad cars flashed on the blocked off street, according to bodycam video released by the Tampa Police Department.

The officer then fashioned a noose from a yellow rope and lassoed it around the top of the gator’s mouth.

“Ready?” one of the officers said. “You want to jump on him?”

And that’s what they did, as one officer went for the head with outstretched hands and another officer weighed down the rest of the alligator’s body. A third officer was recruited to help weigh the gator down.

The officer keeping the gator’s mouth shut asked his colleagues for a towel to cover its eyes and some duct tape to wrap its mouth. They also taped together the gator’s legs. “Behind his back, like you’re handcuffing him,” an

officer said.

Phil Walters, an alligator trapper contracted with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Nuisance Alligator Program who was called in to assist the officers, said he was impressed with the job done by Tampa’s finest before he arrived at the scene.

“And they did a great job,” Walters told Tampa television station WFLA. “They had that thing taken care of for me.”

Science & Technology

Google's artificially intelligent 'Bard' set for next stage

By **MICHAEL LIEDTKE**
AP TECHNOLOGY WRITER

Google announced Tuesday it's allowing more people to interact with "Bard," the artificially intelligent chatbot the company is building to counter Microsoft's early lead in a pivotal battleground of technology.

In Bard's next stage, Google is opening a waitlist to use an AI tool that's similar to the ChatGPT technology Microsoft began deploying in its Bing search engine to much fanfare last month. And last week, Microsoft embedded more AI-powered technology in its word processing,

spreadsheet and slide presentation programs with a new feature called Copilot.

Until now, Bard had only been available to a small group of "trusted testers" hand-picked by Google. The Mountain View, California, company, which is owned by Alphabet Inc., isn't saying how many people will be given access to Bard in the next step of the technology's development. Initial applicants will be limited to the U.S. and the U.K. before Google offers Bard in more countries.

Google is treading carefully with the rollout of its AI tools, in part because it has more to lose if the tech-

nology spits out inaccurate information or takes its users down dark corridors. That's because Google's dominant search engine has become a de facto gateway to the internet for billions of people, raising the risk of a massive backlash that could tarnish its image and undercut its ad-driven business if the technology behaves badly.

Despite the technology's pitfalls, Bard still offers "incredible benefits" such as "jumpstarting human productivity, creativity and curiosity," Google said in a blog post that two of its vice presidents — Sis-sie Hsiao and Eli Collins

— wrote with assistance from Bard.

As a precautionary measure, Google is limiting the amount of interaction that can occur between Bard and its users — a tactic Microsoft has imposed with ChatGPT after media coverage detailed instances when the technology likened an Associated Press reporter to Hitler and tried to persuade a New York Times reporter to divorce his wife.

Google also is providing access to Bard through a separate site from its search engine, which serves as the foundation for the digital ads that generate most of its

profits. In a tacit acknowledgement that Bard may be prone to straying into manufacturing falsehoods, which are being called "hallucinations" in technology circles, Google is providing a query box connected to its search engine to make it easier for users to check on the accuracy of the information being displayed by the AI.

Bard made an embarrassing blunder shortly after Google unveiled the tool by

prominently displaying a wrong answer about a scientific milestone during a presentation that was supposed to show how smart the technology could be. The gaffe contributed to a nearly 8% drop in Alphabet's stock in a single day, wiping out about \$100 billion in shareholder wealth and underscoring how closely investors are watching how Google handles the transition to AI.

What's happening with Twitter blue check marks?

By **MATT O'BRIEN**
AP TECHNOLOGY WRITER

Elon Musk had promised to take away all of Twitter's blue check marks doled out to Hollywood stars, professional athletes, business leaders, authors and journalists unless they start buying a monthly subscription to the social media service.

Musk's goal was to shove the advertising-dependent platform he bought for \$44 billion last year into a pay-to-play model—and maybe antagonize some enemies and fellow elites in the process.

But the Saturday deadline passed and the blue checks are still there, many with a new disclaimer explaining they might have been paid for or they might not have been paid for—nobody but Twitter really knows. The company didn't return a request to clarify its changing policies Monday.

DOES A BLUE CHECK MATTER?

Matt Darling has been on Twitter for about 15 years and never cared about not having a blue check, though he'd get a kick out of whenever a verified account of "some real-world importance" started following him.

"People on Twitter will joke about blue checks like they're the aristocracy but I don't think anyone actually thought that," except for Musk, Darling said.

Now, Darling finally got a blue check after paying \$11 last month to try out some of the features that come with a Twitter Blue subscription. But seeing it becoming more of a "scarlet letter" under Musk than a symbol of credibility, he used a technique to scrub the blue tick from his profile.

"Now it's a signal of you're a person who's not making good tweets so you have to pay for engagement," said Darling, an economist at the center-right Niskanen Center.

Musk has said that starting April 15, only verified accounts will appear in Twitter's

For You feed that recommends what tweets people see. Darling is planning to drop the subscription—it had too many glitches, and he's not looking for more online clout.

"I don't want Twitter to be pay-for-play. I want it to be a place where people writing interesting tweets are getting the engagement," he said.

HYBRID MODEL

Instead of taking away the blue check marks, Twitter on Sunday began appending a new message to profiles: "This account is verified because it's subscribed to Twitter blue or is a legacy verified account."

In other words, singer Dionne Warwick and other high-profile verified users still have their blue checks. But so does anyone who pays between \$8 and \$11 a month for a Twitter Blue subscription—and there's no way to tell the difference. (Warwick, for her part, made clear she won't be paying for a blue check because that money will "be going towards my extra hot lattes.")

That hybrid solution was good enough for Star Trek actor William Shatner, who earlier balked at signing up for a subscription but on Sunday tweeted to Musk: "I can live with this. This is a good compromise". But it's not clear if it is a temporary or permanent measure.

THE EXCEPTION

Twitter did take away at least one verified check over the weekend: from the main account of the New York Times. The account, which has 55 million followers, had previously been marked with a gold-colored check for verified organizations.

But a user pointed out to Musk over the weekend that the newspaper had said publicly it wouldn't be paying a monthly fee for checkmark status, so Musk said he would remove the mark and also disparaged the newspaper's reporting.

DNA: Woman was on famed 17th century Swedish warship

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP)—A U.S. military laboratory has helped Swedes confirm what was suspected for years: A woman was among those who died on a 17th-century warship that sank on its maiden voyage, the museum that displays the ship said Tuesday.

The wreck of the royal warship Vasa was raised in 1961, and was remarkably well-preserved after more than 300 years underwater in the Stockholm harbor. It has since been placed at the Vasa Museum, one of Stockholm's top tourist attractions where visitors can admire its intricate wooden carvings.

Some 30 people died when the Vasa keeled over and sank just minutes after leaving port in 1628. They are believed to have been crew members and most of their identities are unknown.

For years, there were indications that one of the victims, known as G, was a woman, because of the appearance of the hip bone, Fred Hocker, research leader at the Vasa Museum, said in a statement.

Anna Maria Forsberg, a historian with the Vasa Museum, told The Associated Press that women were not part of the crew in the Swedish navy in the 17th century, but they could be on board as guests. Seamen were allowed to have their wives with them onboard unless the ship was going into battle or going for a long journey.

"We know from written sources that around 30 people died that day," Forsberg said. "It is thus likely that she was a seaman's wife who wanted to come along on the maiden journey of this new, impressive ship."

She said the exact number of people on board that day was not known "but we think there were around 150 people. An additional 300 soldiers were sup-



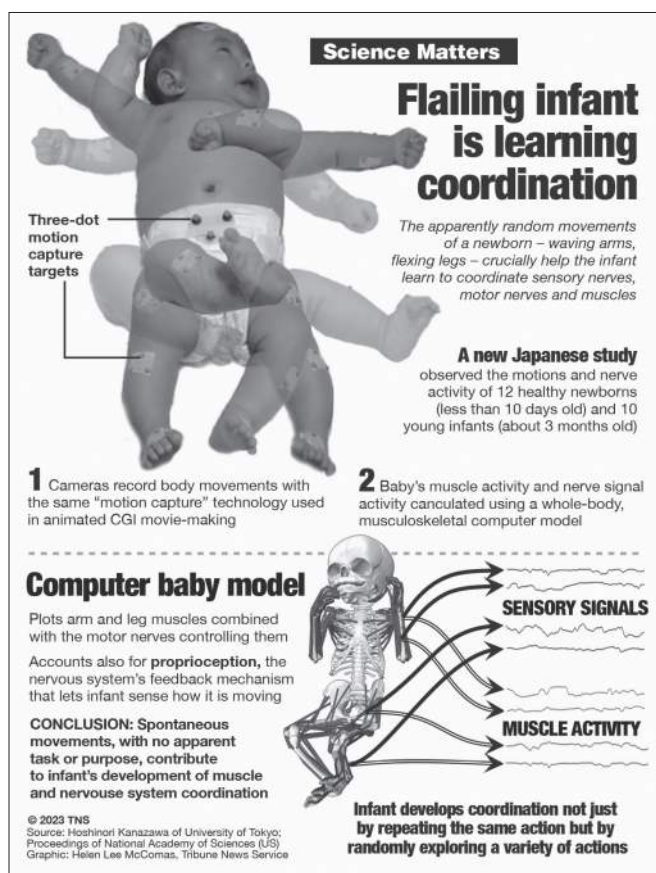
The royal warship Vasa is seen at the Vasamuseet museum in Stockholm, April 24, 2011.

posed to board further out in the archipelago," she said.

Since 2004, the Vasa Museum collaborated with the Department of Immunology, Genetics and Pathology at Uppsala University, which examined all the skeletons on Vasa in order to find out as much as possible about the various individuals on the doomed vessel.

"It is very difficult to extract DNA from bones that have been on the seabed for 333 years, but not impossible," Marie Allen, professor of forensic genetics at Uppsala University said in the statement. "Simply put, we found no Y chromosomes in G's genome. But we couldn't be completely sure and we wanted to have the results confirmed."

So they turned to the Delaware-based Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory. And thanks to the forensics laboratory specializing in DNA profiling at the Dover Air Force Base, "we have been able to confirm that the individual G was a woman,



using the new test," Allen said.

The Vasa which was supposed to go to a naval base outside Stockholm to wait for

the boarding of the soldiers, is believed to have sunk because it lacked the ballast to counterweigh its heavy guns.

Life & Style

Queen Camilla: Charles' wife gets title on coronation invite

LONDON (AP)—King Charles III's wife has been officially identified as Queen Camilla for the first time, with Buckingham Palace using the title on invitations for the monarch's May 6 coronation.

Camilla, who until now has been described as queen consort, is given equal billing on the ornate medieval style invitations that will be sent to more than 2,000 guests and were unveiled on Tuesday.

The new title is another step in the remarkable transformation of a woman once derided as a homewrecker because of her role in the breakdown of Charles' marriage to the late Princess Diana.

Charles and Camilla met long before the future king married Diana in 1981 and their relationship continued throughout the tumultuous marriage. That made Camilla an object of scorn among Di-

ana's many fans, who rallied around the princess as her marriage collapsed.

But Camilla has won over much of the British public with her warmth and down-to-earth humor since she married Charles in a civil ceremony in 2005. The late Queen Elizabeth II early last year issued a statement saying she hoped Camilla would be known as "queen consort" when Charles became king.

Camilla will be crowned alongside her husband on May 6 at Westminster Abbey.

The palace released a few more details about the coronation on Tuesday, announcing that 9-year-old Prince George, the king's eldest grandson, who is second in line to the throne, would be one of four pages of honor attending the monarch during the service. Camilla will also have four pages.

The eight young pages are either family friends or close relatives of Charles and Camilla and will carry the robes of prominent figures during the day.

The coronation invitations feature the ancient motif of the Green Man in a nod to the monarch's record of supporting conservation and environmental protection.

The Green Man is "an ancient figure from British folk-

lore, symbolic of spring and rebirth, to celebrate the new reign," the palace said.

"The shape of the Green Man, crowned in natural foliage, is formed of leaves of oak, ivy and hawthorn, and the emblematic flowers of the United Kingdom."

The design, created by heraldic artist and manuscript illuminator Andrew Jamieson, will be printed on a recycled card with gold foil detailing.

SEATTLE (AP)—A plan announced last week to return Lolita, a killer whale held captive for more than a half-century, to her home waters in Washington's Puget Sound thrilled those who have long advocated for her to be freed from her tank at the Miami Seaquarium.

But it also called to mind the release of Keiko—the star of the movie "Free Willy"—more than two decades ago. Keiko's return to his native Iceland improved upon his life in a Mexico City tank, but he failed to adapt to the wild and died five years later.

He is the only orca released after long-term captivity. Some of Lolita's former caregivers are warning she could face a similar fate—or that she might not survive a move across the country.

But advocates say there are big differences between the cases and that their experience with Keiko will inform how they plan for Lolita's return.

While they hope to bring Lolita—also known as Toki, or Toki—to a whale sanctuary among the Pacific Northwest's many islands, they know she might never again swim freely with her endangered family, including the nearly century-old whale believed to be her mother.

Here's a look at Toki's story.

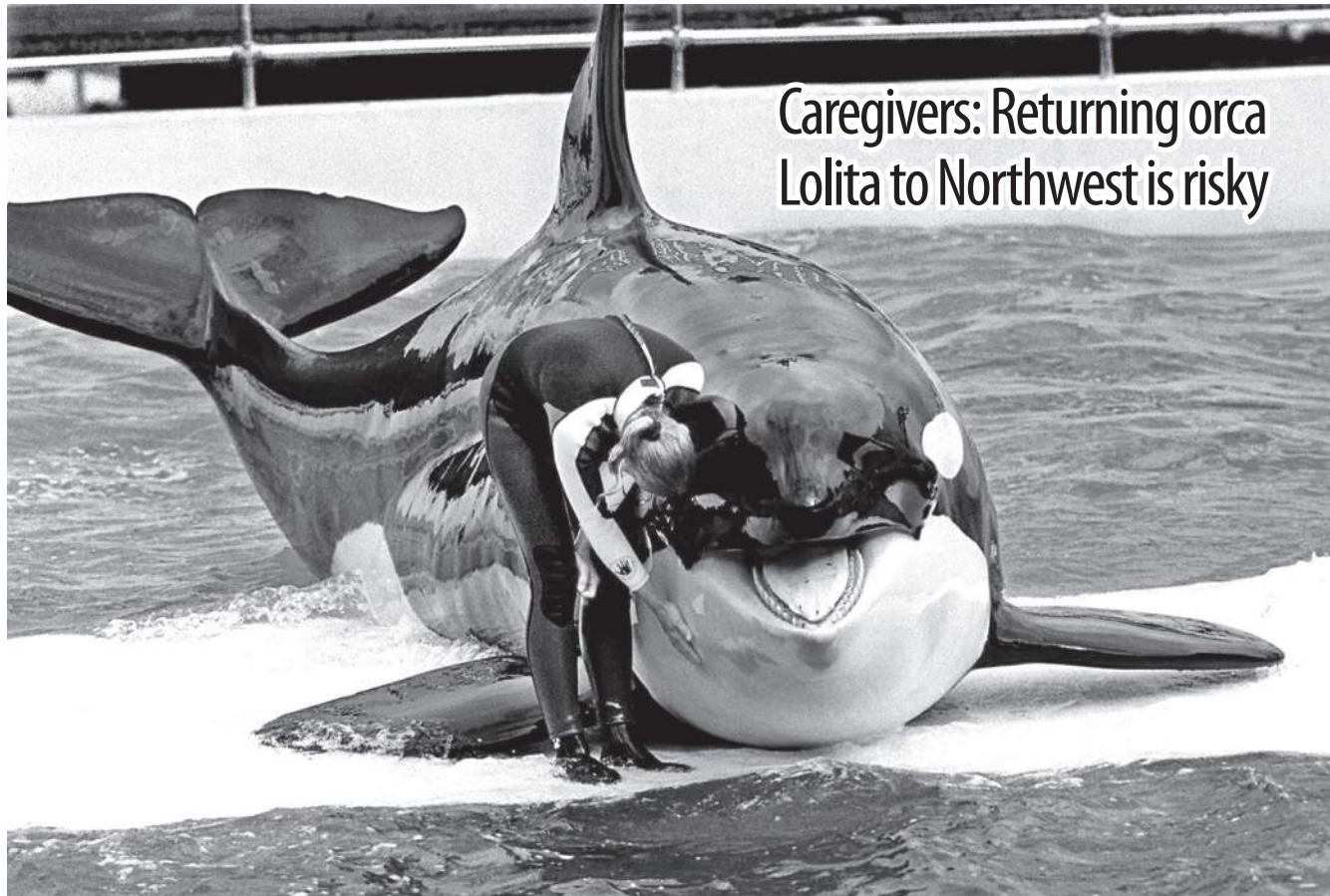
HOW DID TOKI WIND UP IN CAPTIVITY?

Native American tribes of the Pacific Northwest revere orcas, considering them their relatives.

White settlers had a different view. Fishermen reviled the "blackfish" as competition for salmon and sometimes shot them.

That began to change in 1965, when a man named Ted Griffin bought a killer whale that had been caught in a fisherman's net in British Columbia and towed it to the Seattle waterfront. The whale—Namu—became a sensation.

Namu soon died from an infection, but Griffin had set off a craze for capturing the Pacific



Trainer Marcia Hinton pets Lolita, a captive orca whale, during a performance at the Miami Seaquarium in Miami, March 9, 1995.

AP

Caregivers: Returning orca Lolita to Northwest is risky

Northwest's killer whales and training them to perform, as The Seattle Times recounted in a 2018 history. Griffin corralled dozens of orcas off Washington's Whidbey Island in 1970. Several got caught and drowned when opponents cut the nets, intending to free them.

Many orcas remained nearby, declining to leave as their clan members were hauled out of the water. Among those kept was 4-year-old Toki, later sold to the Miami Seaquarium.

By the early 1970s, at least 13 Northwest orcas had been killed and 45 delivered to theme parks around the world; Toki is the only one still alive. The roundups reduced the Puget Sound resident population by about 40% and helped cause problems with inbreeding that imperil them today.

Outrage over the captures helped prompt the U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972.

WHY BRING TOKI HOME?

Lolita, now 57, spent decades

performing. Last year the Miami Seaquarium announced it would no longer feature her under an agreement with regulators. The 5,000-pound (2,267-kilogram) animal lives in a tank 80 feet by 35 feet (24 meters by 11 meters) and 20 feet (6 meters) deep.

Whales are intelligent, social creatures, and activists have long dreamed of returning Toki to her family.

The whale believed to be Toki's mother is the matriarch of L-pod, one of three clans that make up the so-called southern resident killer whales, a genetically and socially distinct population that frequents the Salish Sea between Washington and British Columbia. There are 73 southern residents remaining.

Plans call for bringing Lolita to a netted whale sanctuary of about 15 acres (6 hectares). She would be released into an enclosure the size of a couple football fields within that sanctuary, where she would be under round-the-clock care.

"The first objective is to

provide her the highest quality of life we can," said Charles Vinick, a founder of the non-profit Friends of Toki as well as executive director of the Whale Sanctuary Project. "Whether or not it becomes the dream of having her reunite with L-pod is something we have to rely on Lolita to show us."

Because the southern residents are endangered, advocates would have to obtain additional permits if they ever wanted to return Toki fully to the wild. Advocates would likely have to show that introducing another aging whale wouldn't further burden the population, which has struggled with a dearth of salmon.

With financial backing from Indianapolis Colts owner Jim Irsay, they have agreed to support Lolita long term, whether she's reintroduced or not.

For Raynell Morris, an elder of the Lummi Indian Tribe in Washington and a board member of Friends of Toki, the whale's return is fundamental.

"Until she's returned to her family, our family is broken,"

Morris said. "When she comes home, the web of life will be repaired and restored, and our people will be repaired and restored."

But a group of some of Lolita's former caregivers called Truth 4 Toki announced an online petition Tuesday to keep her in Florida—perhaps at SeaWorld Orlando, where she can live alongside the two Pacific white-sided dolphins she has lived with for the past 30 years.

They describe her as a geriatric animal in poor health who has had trouble adjusting to changes as slight as introducing different music into her performance routine. They say the stress of the move could kill her, but if it doesn't, she could be susceptible to pollutants in Puget Sound.

"We tried this once with Keiko, and it was an epic failure," said Shanna Simpson, who trained Lolita from 2003-09. "This is rainbows and fluffy human feelings. It's going to wind up in Toki's death."

HOW DO YOU MOVE A

2.5-TON WHALE?

When all the pieces are in place—which could take two years—and Lolita is deemed healthy enough to move, she would be put on a stretcher. She'd be lifted by crane into a tank placed on a truck, and the truck driven to a cargo plane.

She'd be flown to Washington, loaded onto a barge, floated to the sanctuary, and lowered by crane into her new home.

Toki's transportation tank would be filled with fresh water—salt water could ruin the plane in the event of a leak. Her caregivers would protect her skin with ointment.

Advocates will work with Washington's Department of Natural Resources to pick the sanctuary site.

There, Toki can begin recovering the strength she might need to rejoin wild orcas, to relearn to hunt and to travel around 100 miles (161 kilometers) per day, they say.

WHAT DID WE LEARN FROM KEIKO?

Keiko was about 2 when he was captured in 1979. He spent time in Iceland and Canada before being sold in 1985 to a theme park in Mexico City, where he lived in a tank filled with tap water mixed with salt.

In 1993 he was featured in "Free Willy," prompting a campaign by schoolchildren to get him released. A facility was built at the Oregon Coast Aquarium where the emaciated Keiko could recover before his return to Iceland.

Keiko gained about 1,000 pounds (453 kilograms) in his first year in Oregon.

Vinick, who helped manage Keiko's return, noted that it was always designed as a reintroduction effort. Keiko was in his early 20s—still young for an orca—when he was brought to Iceland in 1998. To teach him to hunt, trainers would launch fish around his pen with a sling shot. Eventually they began escorting him on longer swims in the open ocean.

Johnny Depp-starrer ‘Jeanne du Barry’ to open Cannes

NEW YORK (AP)—The historical drama, “Jeanne du Barry,” starring Johnny Depp as King Louis XV, will open the 76th Cannes Film Festival.

Organizers of the French festival announced Wednesday that this year’s edition will get underway with the

period film directed by and starring Maïwenn, the French actress and filmmaker. She plays Louis XV’s favorite courtesan, Jeanne du Barry.

“Jeanne du Barry” Depp has been billed as Depp’s comeback film fol-



lowing his explosive trial last year with Amber Heard, his ex-wife. After both Depp and Heard accused each other of physical and verbal abuse, a civil jury awarded Depp \$10 million in damages

and \$2 million to Heard. In December, they reached a settlement.

“Jeanne du Barry” will premiere May 16 at Cannes and, sticking with tradition, it will be released the same day in French theaters. Netflix is connected with the film but only loosely. The

streamer licensed the film for the first post-theatrical window 15 months after its debut, and only in France. The cinema-rich country has stiff regulations guarding theatrical windows, which also relate to rules governing Cannes’ competition lineup.

As yet, no U.S. release has been announced for “Jeanne du Barry.”

Cannes earlier announced that “Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny” and Martin Scorsese’s “Killers of the Flower Moon” will make their world premieres at the festival next month.

Q&A: Lewis Capaldi feels ‘naked’ releasing new documentary

By **BROOKE LEFFERTS**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lewis Capaldi’s first album went multiplatinum and led to chart-topping hits, sold-out stadiums, and a Grammy nomination for the singer-songwriter. Besting that with his sophomore album was daunting enough, but then he agreed to allow a Netflix documentary crew to follow him. Capaldi says, with his trademark wit, he wouldn’t recommend it to anyone.

The result is “How I’m Feeling Now,” a film that reveals the fear and anxiety that plagued the recording artist as he returned home to Scotland and tried to write new songs during the pandemic. Capaldi—who has more than 6 million Instagram followers—is known for funny, self-deprecating posts, so the film’s depiction of his mental health struggles, complicated by a recent diagnosis of Tourette syndrome, may be a surprise to his fans.

In a recent interview with The Associated Press, Capaldi describes the release of the film—which drops Wednesday—as a necessary “catharsis,” and discusses lessons learned and staying in his lane. Answers have been edited for clarity and brevity.

AP: How does it feel, releasing the film and making

yourself so vulnerable?

CAPALDI: It’s a bit strange, to be honest. I didn’t really even know that this film was going to be like this. When we started making it, it was going to be me being on tour in 2020 and playing all these festivals and sort of this triumphant thing and actually became quite a vulnerable thing. I feel quite naked. And can I tell you something? I don’t look very good naked! (laughs)

So it’s a bit of a weird one. But yeah, I’m excited for people to see it and I’m really proud of it. The stuff that I’ve addressed since seeing the film, it’s just been a really cathartic experience all round and catharsis isn’t always easy or painless.

AP: What did you learn about yourself in the process of making the film?

CAPALDI: It’s a lot more tragic than I was expecting! I see what I see when I’m speaking to my parents or my friends or whatever. But I don’t see how it affects them when I’m not around. I was like, ‘I really need to get myself in order,’ because it’s not fair on other people for me to continue to sort of neglect my own mental health.

It was such a surreal experience watching it all back and it was a lot more depressing than I was expecting. I was surprised that I never died at

the end. (laughs) I was like, wow, this is pretty real. But it’s cool. I’m very grateful for the opportunity to make it.

AP: You had writer’s block working on the second album—was that even harder with a film crew following you? Did you regret it?

CAPALDI: Oh, every single moment of making the documentary, I thought, ‘Why did I agree to do this?!’ Even on days they would just come round my house and found me puttering around for like b-roll footage. I was like, This is so f---ing annoying.

The only way I can describe how I feel ... the only way I’ve described fame in general is “embarrassing.” If I was driving around my hometown or I was going to the pub and the cameras came ... If someone else was doing it, I would be like, ‘Who does this guy think he is bringing a camera around here? Like he thinks people want to watch a film about his life!’ And I’m like, ‘No, I don’t, honestly!’

I lead quite an ordinary life, which I think you can kind of see. I think the amazing thing is what (director Joe Pearlman) managed to pull together, that story of my mental health and the imposter syndrome.

AP: In the doc you get a diagnosis of Tourette syndrome. How are you managing that?



This image released by Netflix shows Lewis Capaldi in a scene from the documentary “Lewis Capaldi: How I’m Feeling Now.”

AP

CAPALDI: I’m glad to have a diagnosis, because I thought I was dying, which is a big thing for me. I try not to learn too much about my Tourette’s because then I find that it gets worse. The more I read about it, the worse it gets. Some days it’s fine and some days it’s a lot worse than others. But I just kind of have to get on with it, unfortunately. That’s just how my life is.

AP: You personally and regularly respond to hundreds of fans on social media. Why is that important to you?

CAPALDI: A lot of people don’t realize a lot of this job

is sitting around waiting to do something, whether it’s a gig, or waiting to do an interview. So it’s not actually as cumbersome as people might think. People taking the time to comment ... It’s nice to take the time to comment back, I guess. It’s just something we’ve done since when we first started posting stuff and it was four comments on a post. And I know that it can be anywhere from four to 40,000. It’s nice to have a little back-and-forth with people who are keen on the music and keen on things that I do.

AP: Your social feeds are so funny—have people ap-

proached you about acting?

CAPALDI: I don’t think I’d be able to do acting. We shot a music video recently for a song that I brought out called ‘Pointless’ that never actually made it out because I have a real problem looking at people’s faces and it just feels so odd to me. It looked so stiff and weird. There was an agent once who asked me about films, but I won’t be doing a Harry Styles anytime soon and conquering the world of acting.

I think for now I’m staying firmly in my lane. Unless the music work dries up, in which case I’ll take the cash from anywhere.

Grandma required to treat newcomer as one of her own

DEAR ABBY: My son is in a relationship with "Cheryl." They live together. Cheryl has a daughter and is demanding that I treat the girl as one of my granddaughters. I have bought birthday presents, Christmas gifts and generally spend the same amount on all the kids. But I have been told that Cheryl doesn't like what I buy her daughter and tosses the clothes at one of my other granddaughters who lives there and says, "Here! YOU take it. It's ugly!"

I know she talks bad about me to my son, and so does her mother. Interestingly, Cheryl's mother doesn't have to buy anything for my granddaughters on their birthdays or Christmas. I'm frustrated because I'm not allowed to have my granddaughters spend the night with me without being told that I must include her daughter. My granddaughters prefer it'd be just them and me.

Am I wrong in feeling that I shouldn't have to take Cheryl's daughter every time my granddaughters want to spend the night with me?

GRAND KID DILEMMA

DEAR DILEMMA: No, you are not wrong. Is Cheryl's mother also being blackmailed into hosting your granddaughters every time her grandchild stays the night with her? If the answer is no, the same should be true for you.

It's time for a serious private discussion with your son,

because it doesn't seem right that he and his girlfriend have an automatic date night every time his daughters want to spend some quality time with Granny. It would be more equitable if you took Cheryl's daughter PART of the time instead of every time.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I have a longtime friend, "Eve," whose husband just died at 55. She is, of course, devastated. To combat her grief and loneliness, she's going out every day or night with dozens of girlfriends. This is good because she's doing all kinds of new sports and activities and filling her time with interesting people and events.

The problem is, she has developed a close relationship with "Anne." Anne did some unbelievably mean, cruel things to me (and others) when she hired me for a short job, and I saw how Machiavellian she really is. I know Eve will one day have a party or some other gathering and invite the two of us with others. I cannot bear to see Anne ever again.

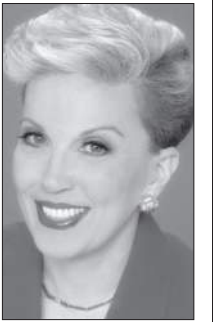
I don't want to tell Eve about my terrible encounters with Anne. But I'm certain she is vulnerable right now in her profound grief, and I'm also certain Anne is using her. Without going into more detail, what would you do?

CORNERED IN COLORADO

DEAR CORNERED: I would tell Eve about my unpleas-

DEAR ABBY

By **Abigail Van Buren**
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

ant experience with Anne. I would also mention my concern that she is emotionally vulnerable right now, and that in your experience, Anne was extremely manipulative, and she should watch her back. If she asks for specifics, I would give her chapter and verse. In the event that you are subsequently invited to a gathering where Anne will be present, give your regrets.

■■■

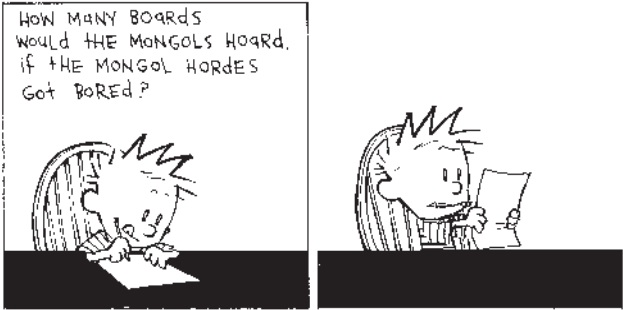
To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

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Pastimes

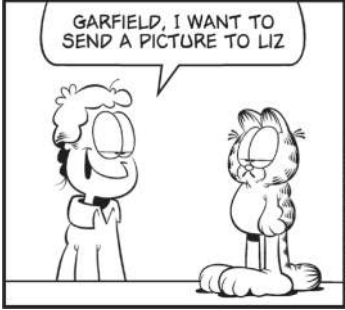
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis



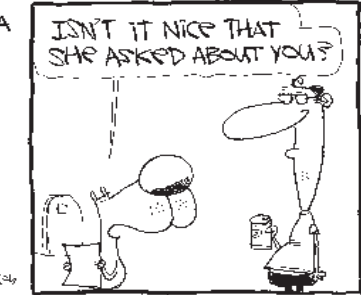
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Mamas' mates

6 Spinning toy

9 Hot tub

12 Florida city

13 Ram's mate

14 French article

15 Carried on, as war

16 Charm

18 Glorifies

20 — account (never)

21 CEO's degree, often

23 Golf peg

24 Boring tool

25 Gum flavor

27 Riyadh residents

29 Luggage attachments

31 Glanced sideways

35 Bumpkin

37 Challenge

38 Rudd and Revere

DOWN

1 "Wham!"

17 Put up

19 Tether

2 Obama-care initialism

3 Easter performance

4 "Roots" author

5 Nasser's successor

6 Wobble

7 Has chest muscle

8 Word on the street?

10 Tubular pasta

11 John Jacob

21 2001, to Cato

22 Auction action

24 Honest politician

26 "Red" singer

28 Vocally

30 Xenon, for one

32 Glowing

33 Geological period

34 Cotillion celeb

36 "Swan Lake" princess

38 Macadamized

39 Acid in proteins

40 Brown shade

42 Excavated

45 L-Q bridge

46 Singer Alessia

48 Oklahoma city

50 Middling grade

51 Letter addenda, for short

Solution time: 21 mins.

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

1 F E S T I V I T Y

2 T U R T L E

3 S T R I P

4 A R A

5 I A R A

6 C A R

7 I L

8 A R

9 D

10 T R I L

11 D I V A N S

12 F A R

13 K I S

14 D A R T

15 O R E C O R D

16 A G O

17 A N O

18 A C E

19 N E A I

20 I D E A

21 E J A M

22 D R S

23 D O E

24 A S S U M E

25 T R Y S T S

26 H A H N

27 D F E

28 O R E O

29 A M O K

30 D S

31 R O M O

32 S C W S

33 Y E T

34 C I S P N

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Russell Crowe, 59; Jackie Chan, 69; John Oates, 75; Francis Ford Coppola, 84.

Happy Birthday: Listen carefully and decide what others want from you before you agree. Strive for equality in your relationships with others, and you'll maintain balance and find it easier to reach your goals this year. Open your doors to those who enrich your life, and you'll become the leader of the pack. Set goals that make you feel good about yourself. Your numbers are 5, 17, 20, 24, 32, 35, 41.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Don't get into a senseless argument. Take the high road, and use intelligence and physical attributes to live up to your promises. How you treat others will determine what you get in return. An optimistic attitude will turn you into a go-to person. ***

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Say what's on your mind and leave no room for errors or misunderstandings. An articulate description regarding what you are able and willing to do will help others know what to expect and how they can contribute. ***

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Keep your plans a secret, and you'll eliminate someone from taking over or stealing your ideas. Concentrate on your attributes and how to turn something you are good at doing into a prosperous venture. An opportunity will develop if you help someone. ***

CANCER (June 21-July 22): You may not welcome change, but it will benefit you if you let things unfold naturally. Don't fight the inevitable or ignore something

you should embrace. Don't fear trying something new or taking the road less traveled. Romance is favored. *****

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Consider what you can achieve and follow through. Don't let anyone take advantage of you or bully you into something that cuts into time spent with loved ones. Being generous is commendable, but don't let anyone take you for granted. **

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Be receptive to new ideas. You'll learn quickly and apply what you discover with ease. Spend time with someone who has or is doing something you want to pursue. Extend your hand in friendship and an unusual partnership will develop. Romance is favored. ****

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Bartering will help you get what you need at a price you can afford. How you deal with others will determine what you get in return. Be fair and know your worth, and something good will transpire. You'll gain something unexpected but valuable. ***

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Emotions will get stirred up quickly. Don't hold back; say what's on your mind, and make the changes that will add to your comfort and convenience. A romantic gesture will generate plans and add balance and stability to your life. ***

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Be careful who you trust. Someone will offer something to grab your interest or push you in a direction that helps them more than it does you. Don't hesitate to say no. It's up to you to be true to yourself. ***

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Push for what you want. Don't take no for an answer. Keep your life simple, live within your budget and avoid situations that tempt you to indulge. Home improvements or event hosting are favored, and love and romance are encouraged. ****



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Stay on track, finish what you start and refuse to let outside influences interfere with your plans. A financial opportunity is apparent, but don't go overboard. Spend only what you can afford to lose. Practicality is necessary when dealing with loved ones. **



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Make personal improvements. Whether you update your image, fix up your space or tidy up loose ends, you will feel good about what you achieve. Reveal your intentions and make plans. Romance will bring you closer to someone you love. *****
Birthday Baby: You are helpful, insightful and energetic. You are productive and charitable.

☾: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ☼: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ☼☼: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ☼☼☼: Aim high; start new projects. ☼☼☼☼: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

5	3		2	1				8
1		2	8		9			7
		7			5			
			3	8				
							2	6
8	5			4				
		3	5					
			9		1			
					5	3	2	

Difficulty: ★★★★★

4-7

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

3	7	9	5	2	4	6	1	8
5	1	4	6	8	3	2	7	9
8	6	2	7	1	9	5	3	4
2	9	8	1	5	6	7	4	3
6	3	5	4	9	7	8	2	1
1	4	7	8	3	2	9	6	5
7	5	6	9	4	1	3	8	2
9	2	1	3	7	8	4	5	6
4	8	3	2	6	5	1	9	7

Difficulty: ★★

1-6

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

'THE SUPER MARIO BROS. MOVIE' (FILM) Solution: 8 letters

R	E	S	W	O	B	Y	O	J	R	O	L	Y	A	T
G	N	O	K	Y	E	K	N	O	D	A	O	T	E	P
A	I	E	I	V	O	M	A	N	S	I	O	N	L	S
M	N	A	N	I	M	A	T	E	D	N	I	U	T	A
E	T	I	M	E	P	I	P	P	A	T	M	A	U	V
Y	E	R	C	A	S	T	R	G	R	B	R	E	C	E
A	N	S	S	G	E	I	O	A	E	M	A	S	H	J
D	D	H	N	K	N	R	M	R	A	H	Y	C	H	A
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Airship, Animated, Anya, Armisen, Attack, Bowser, Cast, Character, Charles Martinet, Charlie Day, Chris Pratt, Cranky, Donkey Kong, Eric Bauza, Escape, Fire, Game, Jack Black, Kamek, King, Luigi, Mansion, Mario, Movie, Nintendo, Peach, Penguin, Pipe, Plumber, Princess, Save, Seth Rogan, Spike, Star, Taylor-Joy, Toad, Universal, Work
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Bucks clinch NBA's best record, beat Bulls, 105-92



MILWAUKEE (AP)—Bobby Portis had 27 points and 13 rebounds, starting in place of the injured Giannis Antetokounmpo and the Milwaukee

Bucks wrapped up the top seed in the NBA playoffs, beating the Chicago Bulls 105-92 on Wednesday night.

Antetokounmpo was ruled out before the game because of right knee soreness. He had 28 points, 11 rebounds, 10 assists against Washington on Tuesday night.

Brook Lopez had 26 points, point guard Jrue Holiday added 20 points, 15 assists and eight rebounds and Jevon Carter had 16 points in a starting role. Khris Middleton started for the Bucks, but played just eight minutes before exiting with right knee soreness. He was 0 for 3 from the floor.

Milwaukee improved to 58-22, fighting back from a 10-point, third-quarter deficit. The Bucks lead fellow Eastern Conference foe Boston by three games with two games remaining.

CLIPPERS 125, LAKERS 118

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Norman Powell scored 27 points, Kawhi Leonard added 25 and the Los Angeles Clippers improved their playoff seeding chances with a win over LeBron James and the Lakers.

The Clippers' 11th straight victory over their Crypto.com Arena hallmates pulled



Milwaukee Bucks' Brook Lopez is fouled by Chicago Bulls' DeMar DeRozan during the first half of an NBA basketball game Wednesday, April 5, 2023, in Milwaukee.

them into a tie with idle Golden State for fifth in the West at 42-38. The Clippers and Lakers came into their final meeting of the season tied in the standings at 41-38.

The Lakers had already clinched at least a play-in spot, but are trying to finish in the top six and earn one of the guaranteed postseason spots. The Clippers own the head-to-head tiebreaker over the Lakers.

James had 33 points, eight rebounds, seven assists and six turnovers for the Lakers, who were closing out a back-to-back. Anthony Davis had 17 points and 11 rebounds for the Lakers, who had won four in a row and seven of eight.

CELTICS 97, RAPTORS 93

BOSTON (AP)—Malcolm Brogdon scored 29 points and hit two late free throws

to help Boston hold on for a victory over Toronto.

With Milwaukee's win over Chicago, Boston (55-25) secured the No. 2 seed in the Eastern Conference playoffs.

Jaylen Brown added 25 points and 11 rebounds. Derrick White finished with 17 points in the opener of a two-game series. The teams meet again Friday in Boston.

A night after their two-point loss at Philadelphia, the Celtics played without three starters. All-Star Jayson Tatum (bruised left hip), Marcus Smart (neck spasms) and Al Horford (back stiffness) all got the night off on the second night of the back-to-back.

The Raptors (40-40) fell a game behind eighth-place Atlanta (41-39) in the standings. Pascal Siakam had 18 points and 11 rebounds. Scottie Barnes

added 18 points and eight rebounds.

MAVERICKS 123, KINGS 119

DALLAS (AP)—Kyrie Irving scored 25 of his 31 points during a second-half rally, and Dallas stayed in the race for the final play-in spot in the Western Conference with a victory over Sacramento.

Luka Doncic had 29 points and 10 rebounds as the Mavericks (38-42) matched Oklahoma City's record for the 10th seed in the West with two games remaining.

The Thunder own the tiebreaker, so Dallas, which reached the West finals last year, needs at least one Oklahoma City loss to have a chance at another playoff run.

Facing the brink of postseason elimination with a loss, the Mavericks rallied from 13 points down in the third quarter, when Irving started and finished a 12-0 run with 3-pointers for an 82-78 lead.

Doncic and Tim Hardaway Jr., who scored 24

points, had the other two 3s on the run as Doncic and Irving won for the fifth time in 16 games together since the blockbuster trade that brought Irving from Brooklyn.

PELICANS 138, GRIZZLIES 131, OT

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Herbert Jones scored a career-high 35 points and New Orleans overcame a 19-point deficit to beat Memphis and clinch a play-in spot.

Jones' fast-break dunk capped a decisive 10-0 run to open the extra period. The surge started with a pair of 3s by Trey Murphy III, who hit seven 3s in the game and finished with 30 points.

The Pelicans combined to hit 21 3s, including five by Jones, who is known more as a defender than a scorer and was left wide open on several of his perimeter baskets.

CJ McCollum hit six from deep and finished with 31 points and 10 rebounds for New Orleans, while Brandon Ingram overcame a slow start and hit a slew of clutch shots to wind up with 24 points and 13 rebounds.

NETS 123, PISTONS 108

DETROIT (AP)—Mikal Bridges scored 26 points and Brooklyn moved to the verge of a playoff spot by beating Detroit.

Former Pistons guard Spencer Dinwiddie shot 1 for 10 from the floor but matched his career high with 16 assists for the Nets (44-36), who won for the fourth time in five games. They need one more victory or loss by Miami (42-37) to clinch the No. 6 seed in the

Eastern Conference.

Joe Harris had 18 points on six 3-pointers, all in Brooklyn's 47-point first quarter.

R.J. Hampton had a career-high 27 points for Detroit, which has lost 22 of its last 23 games. Jaden Ivey had 23 points and 10 assists.

KNICKS 138, PACERS 129

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Immanuel Quickley scored 39 points, one shy of his career high, and Quentin Grimes had a career-high 36 in New York's victory over Indiana.

Obi Toppin added 32 points and the Knicks shot 52%. Mitchell Robinson finished with 14 points and 16 rebounds.

Jalen Smith scored 19 points for Indiana, T.J. McConnell had 18 and Benedict Mathurin 17. McConnell had 12 assists.

The Knicks had a 52-37 rebounding edge.

HAWKS 134, WIZARDS 116

ATLANTA (AP)—Trae Young returned after missing one game with the flu and scored 25 points and had 16 assists to help Atlanta overwhelm short-handed Washington.

With the win, the Hawks achieved a modest milestone as they prepare for the postseason. The Hawks (41-39) ended a streak of 33 games being within 1 game of .500.

The Nets defeated the Pistons and guaranteed that the Hawks cannot finish as the No. 6 seed in the Eastern Conference and will be in the conference play-in tournament for the second straight season. Atlanta holds the No. 8 seed and has a one-game lead over No. 9 Toronto.

Milwaukee, Denver wrap up No. 1 seeds in NBA playoffs

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

The road to the NBA Finals now goes through Milwaukee. The road out of the Western Conference goes through Denver, for the first time ever.

And the rest of the top half of the Eastern Conference playoff bracket is set as well.

The Bucks will have the No. 1 overall seed and home-court advantage for the entirety of their time in the NBA playoffs, after beating Chicago 105-92 on Wednesday night. Milwaukee is 58-22 this season; no other team can get to more than 57 wins.

"It's just a credit to the players," Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer said. "The players have really stepped up. I think they've embraced the challenge. Night in and night out in this league, it's hard. There's great opposition. ... To have the best record, it is something that matters. It is

important."

The No. 1 seed in the West was decided Wednesday night as well. The Nuggets will have home-court throughout the West playoffs, after New Orleans beat Memphis in overtime — and took away the last bit of hope the Grizzlies had of catching the Nuggets for the top spot out West.

The Bucks are a No. 1 seed for the first time since 2020. Denver has never previously been a No. 1 seed.

Boston (55-25) will be the No. 2 seed in the East, clinching that Wednesday by topping Toronto. That locked Philadelphia (52-27) into the No. 3 seed and a likely first-round matchup with Brooklyn. The Nets (44-36) beat Detroit and now need only one more win or one Miami loss to wrap up the No. 6 seed.

Another first-round Eastern Conference matchup was set earlier this week; No. 4 Cleve-

land will meet No. 5 New York. They'll meet on either April 15 or 16 for Game 1, with the NBA playoffs opening that weekend.

Still unclear in the East is the order of the teams headed to the play-in tournament, which starts Tuesday.

Miami is the leader and currently in seventh, ahead of the three other play-in bound teams — Atlanta, Toronto and Chicago. The winner of the No. 7 vs. No. 8 game on Tuesday (as it stands now, the matchup there would be Atlanta at Miami) will draw Boston in Round 1; the other team to emerge from the East play-in tournament will open against the top-seeded Bucks.

Clinching a seed now gives some teams the chance to rest players before the playoffs start, and in many cases, that figures to be welcomed. The Bucks won without Giannis Antetokounmpo on Wednes-

day and with Khris Middleton — who has battled injuries for much of the season — sidelined after eight minutes with a recurrence of knee pain.

"Now we get to take a breath," Budenholzer said. "I have no idea what we'll do Friday and Sunday."

Chicago will be on the road to open the play-in tournament; the Bulls are locked into No. 10 in the East and will visit whichever team finishes ninth — Toronto or Atlanta.

And when the playoffs start for the Bucks, they'll try to defy some recent trends. There hasn't been a No. 1 seed to win the East title since Cleveland in 2016, and no team with the best regular-season record has gone on

to win the NBA Finals since Golden State in 2017.

"I think we're ready, well-prepared," Bucks guard Jrue Holiday said. "I think we've been through a lot ... really excited to be going into the postseason."

WHAT'S LEFT

Most of the drama remains in the West, where Denver, Memphis, Sacramento and Phoenix have clinched playoff spots — and eight teams are still in the running for the six remaining playoff or play-in berths.

Defending champion Golden State, the Los Angeles Clippers, the Los Angeles Lakers, New Orleans and Minnesota can do no worse than make the play-in tourna-

ment. Oklahoma City, Dallas and Utah are all vying for play-in berths.

For now, Golden State and the Clippers — both 42-38 — would be in the playoffs, while the Lakers, Pelicans, Timberwolves and Thunder would have the play-in spots. The Clippers beat the Lakers (41-39) on Wednesday night.

Dallas helped itself Wednesday by topping Sacramento 123-119. The Mavericks (38-42) remained 11th, but are tied with No. 10 Oklahoma City, both teams with two games left. Oklahoma City visits Utah on Thursday, Dallas plays host to Chicago on Friday, and then on Sunday the Thunder play host to Memphis while the Mavs entertain San Antonio.

Franco and Ramirez homer in Rays 7-2 win over Nationals



WASHINGTON (AP) — Wander

Franco and Harold Ramirez each had two hits including a home run, and the Tampa Bay Rays defeated the Washington Nationals 7-2 on Wednesday.

The Rays improved to 6-0 and extended the best start in franchise history. They are off to the best start of any team since Baltimore opened 7-0 in 2016 and are the first team to win its first six games by four or more runs since the 1884 St. Louis Maroons won their first 13 by at least four runs.

“We’ve got some real serious magic on this team,” reliever Ryan Thompson said after closing out the win. “I think a lot of us could start to feel it in spring training. It’s hard to explain. I just feel like the vibe is just a little unique this year versus what I’ve felt in the past.”

Taylor Walls and Randy Arozarena had two hits each for Tampa Bay, which has outscored opponents 44-13.

Shane McCannahan (2-0) allowed two runs on five hits and four walks over six innings, allowing at least one baserunner in every inning but the sixth. He struck out six.

“There’s something real nice about when you settle in and cruise a little bit, but it’s not as sweet as the ones where you’ve really got to earn it,” McCannahan said. “I had to battle and it was a fist fight and kudos to these guys in this locker room for having my back and fighting with me.”

McCannahan was aided by Arozarena, whose leaping catch on Joey Meneses saved a run in the first. Then Manuel Margot made a diving catch in right with a man on to end the seventh.

Victor Robles had two hits for the Nationals, who have lost five of their first six games.

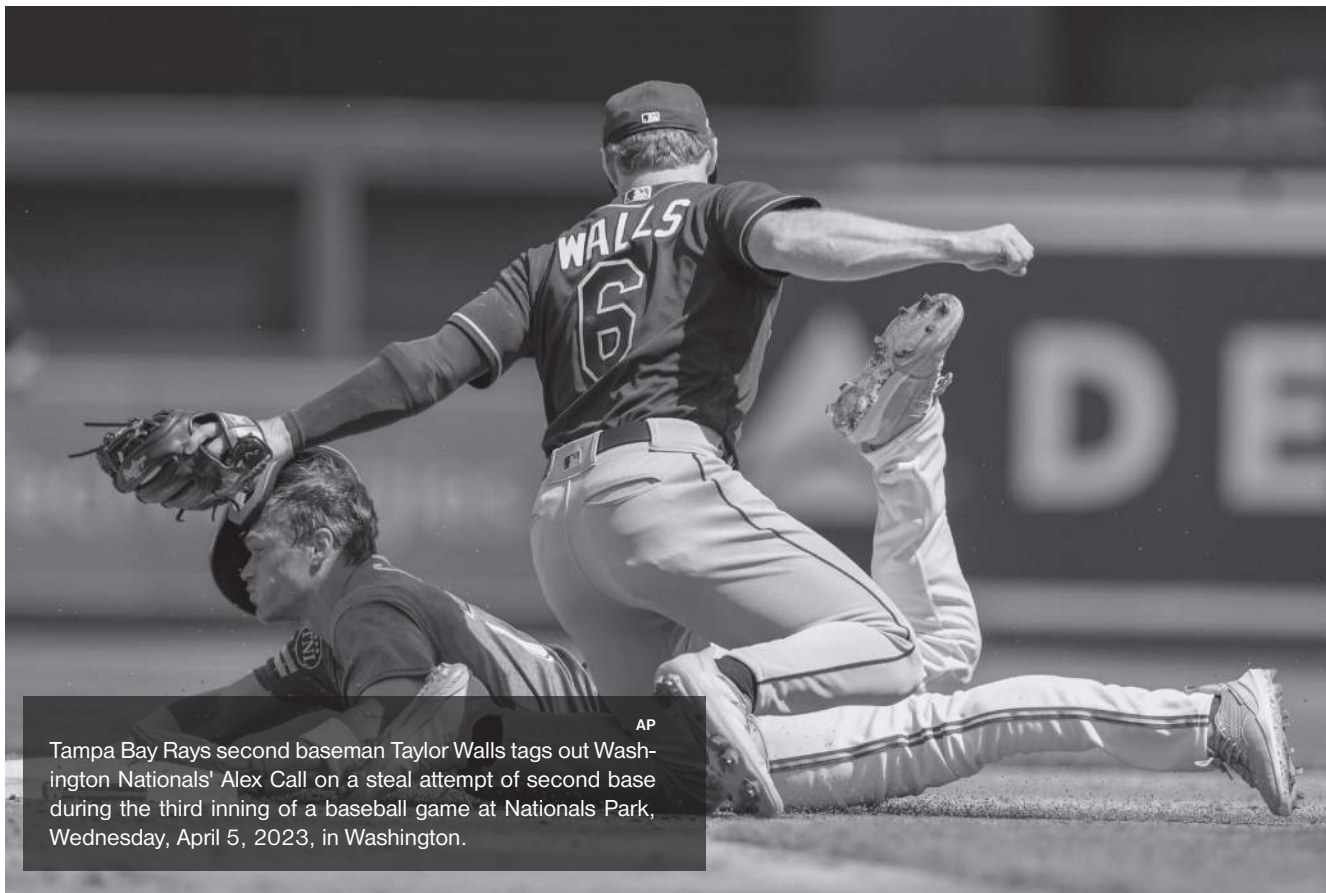
“We’re gonna get better. There’s no doubt about that,” manager Dave Martinez said. “There’s a lot of baseball left. Of course, I want to win every day, but I’m not gonna put any onus on the first week of the season.”

Washington starter Patrick Corbin (0-2) gave up six runs on 10 hits over six innings.

The Rays broke open a close game in the sixth. Corbin had retired 11 in a row before Ramirez lined a homer to center with two outs. Margot then singled, stole second and scored when centerfielder Robles lost Walls fly ball in the sun for a double. Walls scored on a single by Jose Siri to make it 6-2.

The Rays took a 3-1 lead in the third when Yandy Diaz singled and Franco followed with a line-drive homer into the Rays bullpen in left center.

A single by Michael Chavis scored Meneses to make it 3-2 in the fourth. Washington then loaded the bases with no



Tampa Bay Rays second baseman Taylor Walls tags out Washington Nationals' Alex Call on a steal attempt of second base during the third inning of a baseball game at Nationals Park, Wednesday, April 5, 2023, in Washington.

outs, but McCannahan retired Robles on a short fly to right, and struck out CJ Abrams and Lane Thomas.

BRVES 5, CARDINALS 2

ST. LOUIS (AP)—Matt Olson homered and drove in three, and Atlanta completed a three-game sweep of St. Louis.

Bryce Elder (1-0), who was recalled from Triple-A Gwinnett on Tuesday, pitched six strong innings, giving up two hits, striking out six and walking three. Jesse Chavez retired the only batter he faced to earn his first save of the season.

The Braves won for the fifth time in their first six games, while St. Louis has lost three straight.

Cardinals rookie Jordan Walker hit his first career home run, driving a Michael Tonkin slider over the left field wall in the seventh. Walker, who added an RBI double in the ninth, has a six-game hitting streak to start his career.

Cardinals starter Miles Mikolas (0-1) struggled in his second straight start to begin the season, allowing five runs on nine hits, as well as striking out six and walking one. His six innings was the longest for a St. Louis starter this season.

BREWERS 7, METS 6

MILWAUKEE (AP)—Garrett Mitchell hit a tiebreaking homer off Adam Ottavino in the ninth inning and Milwaukee earned its fifth straight victory.

Mitchell sent a 3-2 cutter from Ottavino (0-1) over the right-field wall for his third homer in his two games. Milwaukee's Joey Wiemer added a three-run shot for the rookie's first career homer.

After going scoreless in their first 16 innings of the season, the Brewers have scored 38

runs in their past 36 innings.

Milwaukee's Devin Williams (1-0) retired the side in order in the ninth.

GUARDIANS 6, ATHLETICS 4, 10 INNINGS

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP)—Andrés Giménez scored on pinch-hitter Will Brennan's groundout for the go-ahead run, Stevan Kwan followed with an RBI single and Cleveland held off Oakland.

Giménez began the inning at second base and Myles Straw drew a walk against Zach Jackson (0-1). After Giménez advanced to third on a wild pitch, Brennan lined a 3-2 pitch to shortstop Nick Allen, who threw to first for the out as Giménez crossed home plate.

Eli Morgan (1-0), who was the fourth of five Cleveland pitchers, worked one scoreless inning of relief to win. Emmanuel Clase retired three batters for his second save.

RANGERS 5, ORIOLES 2

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP)—Josh Jung hit a tiebreaking two-run homer soon after Jacob deGrom threw his final pitch of the game, giving the two-time NL Cy Young Award winner his first victory in the American League.

DeGrom (1-0) retired the first 12 batters he faced and finished with 11 strikeouts, but the game was tied 2-2 after he ended the sixth with back-to-back Ks.

Jung's second homer this season came in the bottom of the sixth off Austin Voth (0-1), who had taken over in relief after top pitching prospect Grayson Rodriguez went five innings in his big-league debut and finished with a no-decision.

Texas avoided a series sweep and ended its eight-game skid against the Orioles, who won

all six of their games against the Rangers last season.

YANKEES 4, PHILLIES 2

NEW YORK (AP)—Gerrit Cole outpitched Aaron Nola in a marquee matchup, Gleyber Torres had three hits and two RBIs and the New York Yankees beat Philadelphia.

Torres also stole two bases and is hitting .421 with six RBIs and five steals. Jose Trevino added a two-run homer off reliever Gregory Soto, and New York took two of three for the second straight series. NL champion Philadelphia has skidded to a 1-5 start, its worst since 2007.

Coming off six scoreless innings against San Francisco in the opener, Cole (2-0) pitched shutout ball into the seventh and left after a pitch-clock violation put on a runner who scored the first run off him this season.

On a 48-degree afternoon with a chilling mist, Nola (0-1) gave up three runs and seven hits in six-plus innings with a walk and five strikeouts. He has a 7.45 ERA.

PIRATES 4, RED SOX 1

BOSTON (AP)—Mitch Keller struck out seven, Carlos Santana homered and Bryan Reynolds knocked in his seventh run of the season as Pittsburgh completed a three-game sweep of the Red Sox.

Ke'Bryan Hayes drove in a run with a perfectly-placed bunt in the sixth and Santana added an RBI double during a two-run seventh that put the Pirates up 4-0.

Keller (1-0) braved short sleeves despite the blustery conditions and held Boston to one run on four hits, striking out seven and walking two. He carried a shutout into the seventh, when Triston Casas doubled with two

out and scored on a single by Christian Arroyo.

Boston's Corey Kluber (0-1) held the Pirates to one run on three hits over five innings. The only run charged to Kluber was in the fourth, when Santana pounced on an inside cutter and drove it out to right for his first homer of the season.

MARLINS 5, TWINS 2

MIAMI (AP)—Bryan De La Cruz hit a go-ahead single in the eighth, Jorge Soler homered twice and Jesús Luzardo fanned 10 to lift Miami over Minnesota.

Jean Segura and Jon Berti hit back-to-back one-out singles against reliever Griffin Jax (0-1) in the eighth before De La Cruz's RBI single against Caleb Thielbar scored Segura and broke a 1-1 tie. Soler followed with a three-run shot to left field.

Luzardo had his fifth career double-digit strikeout game; the 25-year-old left-hander struck out 12 against Atlanta on Oct. 25, 2022. On Wednesday, he allowed five hits and a run with one walk before Dylan Floro (1-0) replaced him in the seventh after 99 pitches.

ANGLES 4, MARINERS 3

SEATTLE (AP)—Shohei Ohtani held Seattle to one run in six innings and drove in a run at the plate, leading the Los Angeles Angels over the Mariners.

Ohtani (1-0) kept the Mariners scoreless after allowing a run in a bumpy first inning, finishing his day having allowed three hits and four walks while striking out eight.

After Julio Rodriguez scored in the bottom of

the first to give Seattle the early lead, Logan O'Hoppe hit a two-run homer against Mariners starter Chris Flexen (0-1) to put the Angels on top 2-1.

WHITE SOX 7, GIANTS 3

CHICAGO (AP)—Dylan Cease went five innings in his first win, Tim Anderson got ejected and Chicago came away with the win after losing three of four.

Luis Robert Jr. had three hits, scored twice and drove in a run. Gavin Sheets added three RBIs.

Cease (1-0) kept the Giants in check despite some control issues after they smacked seven homers in Monday's 12-3 romp. The AL Cy Young Award runner-up walked five, but struck out eight. The only hit and run he allowed was a solo homer to J.D. Davis in the second.

Anderson got tossed in the third after being called out on strikes.

Logan Webb (0-2) went five innings, allowing four runs and nine hits.

ASTROS 8, TIGERS 2

HOUSTON (AP)—Chas McCormick, Kyle Tucker and Jeremy Peña all homered and combined for six RBIs to help Houston snap a three-game skid.

McCormick hit a two-run home run in the second off Eduardo Rodriguez (0-2) and doubled in the fourth. Rodriguez allowed six hits and four runs in 4 2/3 innings for his second loss to open the season.

Tucker homered for a second straight game with his solo home run in the fourth to help the Astros avoid a three-game sweep. Tucker added an RBI double in a two-run seventh as Houston padded the lead.

Cristian Javier (1-0) allowed five hits and one run with five strikeouts in six innings for the win.

BLUE JAYS 3, ROYALS 0

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—Alekh Manoah allowed one hit over seven innings, Vladimir Guerrero Jr. hit his first homer of the season and Toronto held Kansas City scoreless.

Manoah (1-0) held the Royals hitless until Jackie Bradley Jr. singled with one out in the fifth. Despite struggling to locate his off-speed pitches for strikes, Manoah struck out five with four walks.

Zack Greinke (0-2) worked ahead of batters all night, throwing first-pitch strikes to 20-of-25 hitters. He threw six innings, allowing a run on seven singles and a walk, striking out three.

Jordan Romano closed out the Royals with a scoreless ninth inning, collecting his third save in three chances.

SUFC undefeated in women's soccer

By LEIGH GASES

leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Southern United Football Club is the only undefeated team left after Week 6 of the Flores-Pée Luwal Division of the 2023 Spring Dove Women's League, while U17 Tan Holdings FC boys and U17 Kanoa FC girls are undefeated eight weeks into the TakeCare NMIFA Youth Spring League 2023.

SUFC slipped past Kanoa FC, 2-1 last Sunday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

Back-to-back attacks at the net in the 23rd minute put up goals for both teams, with a goal for Kanoa by Ellie Tereyama and a goal by SUFC's Erin Fink.

Silence ensued until the second half when SUFC's Keisha Deleon Guerrero found the back of the net in the 59th minute for a 2-1 game.

Right after, Paire and Tan Holdings faced off with the former silencing the latter for a 1-0 win.

Paire's Megumi West slipped through Tan Holding's goalie in the 9th minute for the only goal of the game.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
In this file photo, Southern United Football Club's Brianne Echallico, right, goes against a Paire player during one of their games in the 2023 Spring Dove Women's League at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

In the MP United FC game against Shirley's FC, Rachel Salalila scored the winning

5-1 last Saturday.

Consecutive goals by Isiah

Hossain earned him a hat-trick as he scored a goal in the 3rd,

» Kanoa, Tan Holdings undefeated in youth soccer

goal in the 15th minute, for a 2-1 game as Shirley's could not nip the net for the tie.

Michelle Ann

Masga drew first blood in the 7th minute, while the only goal for Shirley's was made by Toremy Diaz.

TakeCare Youth League

Tan Holdings notched their sixth win against Matansa FC,

up 14-5.

Peleliu's hands were tied as they could not make contact on the ball and lost by a long shot.

Tuturamz 18, Aimeliik 1 Time 8

Tuturamz blanked Aimeliik 1 Time not once, but five times in this 18-8 game.

The only runs scored by Aimeliik were in the fourth inning off a grand slam by Cris George, and three runs in the fifth off Tuturamz's fielding errors.

The Tuturamz had a field day as early on, they scored six runs. They continued to pelt Aimeliik's pitcher with hit after hit and had two home runs by Melvin Sablan and Henry Reyes in the last inning of the game.

ALI'I

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almost everyone up and down the Blue Haus roster scoring at will, led by a bulked up Jaymark De Guzman. Checkpoint was veritably check-mated then and there and trailed 52-29 at the half. Brendon Talanía picked up where De Guzman and company left off in the third, as the bullstrong guard scored easily and as a result Blue Haus entered the fourth and final quarter ahead by 13 points, 69-56.

Ron Esmores tried valiantly to rally Checkpoint in the fourth but there were no rooks turning into queens in basketball, as Blue Haus won it running away.

De Guzman paced all scorers with 21 points, while Talanía added 16 of his own. Esmores wasn't at all clueless in the game and finished with a team-high 17 markers.

In the earlier game, another De Guzman—Jorge—led A's Car Aircon to an 80-56 victory over winless RNV Construction.

A's Car Aircon led from the get-go, grabbing a 17-13 spread after the first canto. It continued to lead, 37-26, at the turn before heading into the final 10 minutes with a 54-38 advantage.

De Guzman led the victors with 14 points, while Alvin Fundador pinched in 11. The Rueda brothers—Ronald and Jun—combined for 27 markers for RNV Construction.

In Monday's game, Blue Haus whipped Ol'Aces, 83-64, in the masters division to improve to 1-1, while giving Ol'Aces its first loss in three games. In the open division, JTM Saipan outlasted Lakay, 74-63, to raise its mark to 3-1, while Lakay is going the opposite direction at 1-3.

Last Saturday, JSN Enterprises burst the bubble of Pepoy's Cafe & Restaurant, 75-62, in their masters affair. Both now sport identical 1-1 win-loss cars. Ali'i slugged out a 54-46 win over Team Socho in a low-scoring game in the open division. The latter dropped to 1-2.

Tuesday's matches were canceled due to rain and will be scheduled for another date.

The games scheduled yesterday were canceled due to bad weather and will be rescheduled on a later date. There are also no games today in observance of Good Friday.

First Game

A's Car Aircon 80 – De

10th, and 22nd minute.

Meanwhile, Matansa were still finding their footing and were still scoreless when Zhi Xiang Lin scored the fourth goal for Tan Holdings.

Finally, in the 60th minute, Nolan Nge-wakl scored what would be the lone goal for Matansa as Tan Holdings' Mark Patubo scored the fifth goal with the clock winding down.

Kanoa FC earned their sixth win as they defeated MP United FC, 6-2.

Markus Toves from Kanoa drew first blood in the 25th minute, with teammate Paul Lizama sailing past the goal four times. The other goal was scored by Gil Sean.

For MPU, Donghyun Lee and Cody Shimizu scored the team's two goals.

In the girls' 17U, SUFC defeated MP United FC, 5-1.

The only goal for MPU was made by Irin Mariana Islands Chung in the 29th minute.

Two goals were made by Summer Manahane, two were made by Pia Ngewakl, and one goal was made by Rosie Saralu.

In the Shirley's-Paire game, Shirley's earned a lopsided 6-2 win.

Hailey Benavente and Alys-sa Borlongan scored two for Shirley's, while Erish Carreon scored one.

Martha Culp and Tsubakiko Joab scored the two goals for Paire.

Second Game

Ali'i 93 – Talanía 16, Elchico 13, N. Mateo 13, Esdrelon 11, Atoigue 7, D. Mateo 5, De Dios 4, Leung 2.

Checkpoint Int'l. 71 – Esmores 17, Bungawan 10, Aparte 8, Ocampo 7, G. Camacho 6, Taraya 6, A. Camacho 4, Ramos 4, Gigan 3.

Scoring by quarters: 17-15, 52-29, 69-56, 93-71.



MARK RABAGO

Carlos Elchico tries to play keep-away against a Checkpoint International defender in the open division of the 2nd Annual Saipan Centennial Lions Club Basketball League last Wednesday at the Civic Center Basketball Court in Susupe.

MAN

From Page 28

hao, 19-9

Eight runs were scored in the second by Hagu La'mun with a three-run home run by Kevin Kapileo.

Five more runs came in the fourth with Tokahao unable to catch up. Tokahao's Rob Bansil scored a two-run home run in the first inning but the team could only produce seven more runs after that.

Momma Charo 16, Peleliu 6

With a slow start, Momma Charo came back to win, 16-6.

Six runs came in the third inning and a home run in the fourth by J.J. Laniyo put them

SCHOOLS

From Page 28

and 16.27, respectively.

In Heat 1 of the 9U girls 100m, TES' Anta Moses was first with 16.87; Breanne Ilo from OES was second with 18.05; and Josie Torres from TES was third with 18.27. Heat 2 Top 3 was Savannah Kikku from KobES with 17.54; Nalaeya Manglona from Sinapalo Elementary School with 18.1; and Afroja Patha from TES with 18.4 seconds. Heat 3 Top 3 was SIS' Scarlett Burrell and Neveah Arriola with 17.16 and 17.64 seconds respectively, and OES' Marianne

Eugenio with 18.42.

In Heat 1 of the 12U girls 100m, OES' Gabriella Ruben was first with 16.03; William S. Reyes Elementary School's Aubyguel Castro with 16.27; and Isabel Carreon from OES with 17.11. The Heat 2 Top 3 were TES' Kiyara Villagomez at 15.49; Rosalie Castro from KobES at 17.27; and SIS' Windsor Gross at 17.51. Heat 3 Top 3 was SES' Jasmine Yalung at 17.06; and OES' Lea Palacios and Argeanna Flores at 17.44 and 17.74 seconds, respectively.

In the 9U boys 400m Heat 1, the Umangs' Dean Aldan and Cherokee Kin were first

and second at 1:19.72 and 1:28.27, respectively; Ramon Camacho from WSR was third with 1:32.40. The second heat was dominated by WSR's NJ Faimaw at 1:23.36; and OES' Eumond Peter and Jaden Concepcion at 1:24.71 and 1:33.23, respectively. Heat 3 first place was Crixus Nebrida at 1:25.99; SCS' Lennox Sablan at 1:35.31; and Lellan Daniel at 1:36.24. Rounding off Heat 4 was Ezra West at 1:29.04; Joedric Torres at 1:29.04; and Gabriel Walsh at 1:32.33.

The 12U boys 400m Heat 1 Top 3 was KobES' Ben Hossain and Napu Pangelinan at

1:15.62 and 1:16.74, respectively; third was Francisco Moses at 1:19.79. Heat 2 Top 3 were TES' Thomas Erickson at 1:19.85; and OES' DK Pino and Damon Dela Cruz at 1:25.01 and 1:25.33, respectively. Heat 3 Top 3 was Jun Young Seo at 1:19.94; OES' Alexander Salundaguit at 1:24.41; and SES' Kody Mendiola at 1:24.80.

In the 9U girls 400m, Neveah Arriola was first with 1:31.90; second was Marianne Eugenio with 1:34.86; and third was Josie Torres at 1:35.18. Heat 2 Top 3 was Scarlett Burrell at 1:33.15; Anita Moses at 1:39.69; and Madison Rabauliman from

OES at 1:41.43. Heat 3 Top 3 was WSR's Kyra Tarkong at 1:30.82; Afroja Patha at 1:44.20; and Julia Mosqueda from SES at 1:46.46.

The 12U girls 400m Top 3 was OES' Erricka Long at 1:24.69; Rosalie Castro at 1:35.03; and WSR's Rinlita Rudolph at 1:37.54. Heat 2 Top 3 was Leilani Ruszala from SIS at 1:29.84; Argeanna Flores at 1:37.20; and KobES' Julyann Hellson at 1:41.10. Heat 3 Top 3 was Kiyara Villagomez at 1:24.10; Windsor Gross at 1:25.66; and OES' Haelie Edwards at 1:31.80.

The 9U boys 1,500m Top 3 was Dean Aldan at 6:54.08; Eumond Peter at 6:55.26; and

Ezra West at 7:01.55. The 12U boys 1,500 Top 3 was Napu Pangelinan at 6:49.96; Kenneth Aguon from WSR at 6:50.15; and Prudencio Manglona at 7:02.25. The 12U girls 1,500m Top 3 was Leilani Ruszala at 7:06.88; Windsor Gross at 7:07.26; and Erricka Long at 7:42.47.

In the 9U softball throw event, Crixus Nebrida threw the farthest at 30.47m; Eumond Peter was second at 28.27m; Vicente Cruz was third with 26.96m. In the 9U girls softball throw event, the Top 3 was Anita Moses at 19.53m; Maria Limes from OES at 16.06m; and Milena Cepeda from TES at 14.06m.



**Bucks clinch
NBA's best
record, beat
Bulls, 105-92**

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Saipan Tribune Sports

**SUFC
undefeated
in women's
soccer**

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

28 FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 2023

Schools complete Week 1 of qualifiers



LEIGH GASES

Runners in the 9U boys 60m race of the NMA/PSS All Schools Athletics 2022-2023 are seen at the track of the Oleai Sports Complex last Thursday.

By **LEIGH GASES**
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REPORTER

Athletics participants completed Week 1 of qualifiers in the NMA/PSS All Schools Athletics 2022-2023 last Friday at the Oleai Sports Complex track and field.

There were four heats in the 9U boys 100m, three heats in the 12U boys 100m, three heats in the 9U girls 100m, three heats in the 9U girls 100m, four heats in the 9U boys 400m, three heats in the 12U boys 400m, one heat each in the 9U/12U boys 1,500m, and one heat each in the 9U/12U girls 1,500m.

Heat 1 in the 9U boys 100m, Vicente Cruz from Tinian Elementary School was the fastest with 17.3; Carver Gross from Saipan International School was second with 17.94; and TES' Xiang Huang was third with 18.82. Heat 2 first place was the Geckos' Gabriel Walsh



Man Amigos, Redmen pelt opponents in men's league

By **LEIGH GASES**
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REPORTER

The Man Amigos and Redmen's bats were on fire in their games of the 2023 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association League last Sunday at the DanDan Softball Field.

Sufa did not go down without a fight against the Man Amigos, but they succumbed to a 21-27 defeat, while the Redmen thrashed Wazzup, 19-13.

The Man Amigos were down by four runs in the last inning, 14-18, but went on a 13-run rampage to steal the W from Sufa.

Sufa pitcher Tom Camacho suffered from the bats of Man Amigos as he gave up multiple base hits and doubles—with his defense taking hits and committing errors as well.

Out of the 13 runs, a home



LEIGH GASES

Redmen's first baseman Joe Quitugua gets the Wazzup runner out after a ground ball to shortstop during their game in the 2023 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association League last Sunday at the DanDan Softball Field.

run was made by Peter Sablan.

Sufa had a hot start with a 12-run first inning off singles and a home run from Pat

Guerrero. Guerrero had another two-run home run in the second, but Sufa settled down in the third and fourth inning.

Mario Aguon hit a grand slam but it wasn't enough to put off the rallying Man Amigos.

In the Redmen-Wazzup game, they started off the game with a lead home run by Lefty Shiro, followed by a grand slam by Jimmy Manalo for a five-run first inning. Only two runs were scored by Wazzup, with only a total of four runs by the end of the fourth.

At this time, the Redmen were already up by 10 points, 14-4, and the lead only lengthened in the last inning with one more home run by Jeff Quitugua. Wazzup tried to play catchup in their last at-bat but came up short as they brought in five runs before the third out for the final 19-13 game.

**Hagu La'mun 19,
Tokahao 9**

In a run-ruled mercy game, Hagu La'mun defeated Tokahao. **See MAN on Page 27**

Ali'i zooms past Checkpoint



MARK RABAGO

Ali'i's Brendon Talania attempts a layup against Checkpoint International in the open division of the 2nd Annual Saipan Centennial Lions Club Basketball League last Wednesday at the Civic Center Basketball Court in Susupe.

By **MARK RABAGO**
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR



Ali'i used a blistering second quarter to cruise to a 93-71 win against winless Checkpoint International in the open division of the 2nd Annual Saipan Centennial Lions Club Basketball League last Wednesday at the Civic Center Basketball Court in Susupe.

It was the third win in four tries for Ali'i, while Checkpoint dropped its fourth straight game.

The match was a seesaw

opening quarter with both teams exchanging leads before Ali'i scored the final basket to take the first 15 minutes of action, 17-15.

It was still a close encounter of the second kind at the start of the next canto, but Blue Haus took control of the game shortly after Austin Camacho was assessed an unsportsmanlike foul on a driving Dan Mateo.

Camacho was disqualified from the game and Mateo went on to make 3-of-4 free throws and Blue Haus scored on a field goal. The floodgates then opened with

See ALI'I on Page 27